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Anticipation

S E R M O N S

BY

FATHERS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

VOLUME II.

By THE REV. THOMAS HARPER.

LONDON:

BURNS, OATES, AND COMPANY, PORTMAN STREET.

1872.

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TO THE
VERY REVEREND J. H. NEWMAN, D.D.,
PROVOST OF THE BIRMINGHAM ORATORY.

VERY REVEREND AND DEAR FATHER,

I have had a lasting desire that my first publication should be dedicated to you, as a very feeble yet sincere token of my deep gratitude for the incalculable benefits which, in the good providence of our God, I have received from you. The peculiar nature of my volume on Dr. Pusey's *Eirenicon*, and many circumstances connected with its appearance, induced me to dedicate it to the Holy Founder of the Order to which it is my privilege to belong. But the present volume has given me the opportunity so long desired. Though personally unknown to you until long after my admission into the Society of Jesus, it was the influence of your sermons and writings which, by the Divine grace, led me to the Church of Jesus Christ. Nor has this influence diminished since that time.

You have kindly consented to this dedication. Be pleased then to receive it as a proof of the veneration and love which I have ever felt for you, and which has increased with the progress of the years.

Believe me to remain,

VERY REVEREND AND DEAR FATHER,
Yours most respectfully and affectionately in
the SS. Hearts,
THOMAS HARPER, S.J.

Feast of the Epiphany, 1872.

PREFACE.

THE first course of sermons in this volume was preached at St. John's Cathedral, Salford, during the Christmas of 1866. A request was then made to me by both clergy and laymen to publish it. Circumstances intervened which prevented me, for a time, from acceding to a wish most kindly and perseveringly urged; but it was my desire, so soon as it seemed to be according to the good pleasure of our God, to fulfil a promise which had been conditionally given to the partial friends who had thus importuned me. I now therefore offer these sermons to the public; and I think it right to add that they appear substantially as I preached them. I trust that those who know me in Manchester will accept the volume as a proof of the esteem and affection which I have entertained for them since the time when, in the good providence of God, I was first

invited, although *then* only for a short season, to labour in their midst. Most especially do I wish, on the first public opportunity which has occurred, to offer my humble and heartfelt thanks to his Lordship the Bishop of Salford, whose unremitting kindness has perseveringly sustained me up to the present hour. His humility will pardon me for adding that, in all my intercourse with him, he has shown, not so much the authority as, the love of a Father in God, and that it is to me a comforting thought, in the present position which I occupy in Manchester, that I enjoy the high privilege of his paternal supervision and unvarying sympathy.

The second series was preached in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street, during the summer of 1869. These conferences also have been published by request. But it is important to note that, although the first two of them are substantially given as they were delivered, the same cannot be said of the third and fourth. The reason is that I had lost the manuscripts of these latter, and have been therefore obliged to trust to memory. The fifth and last was never preached; for

the month, during which I was appointed to preach on the Sunday afternoons, included only four Sundays. It must be simply taken, therefore, as what I should have said, if the opportunity had arisen.

It remains for me to apologize to the public for the long delay in the issue of this volume. My only excuse is that protracted ill-health and continued incapacity for anything like mental labour have rendered their earlier publication a physical impossibility.

I must here interpose a caution, which has been already given in one of the conferences in the second series; but, as it may be easily forgotten, I wish to remind the reader that I never dreamt of refuting the sophisms of that know-nothing school of so-called Philosophy, to which I have nevertheless made repeated allusions. The task indeed would of itself be no easy one; because there is no common ground on which to commence the contest. However, independently of such difficulty, my aim lay in quite another direction. I wanted to strengthen Christians in their adhesion to the patent truths of Theism by pointing out to them the inevitable results which must

flow from the negation, or even the conscious ignoring of these first principles of natural Theology, and to provide them with a course of thought, which might serve to preserve them unscathed amid the paralogisms and unsupported assertions of modern scepticism. I never thought of encountering this neoteric system face to face; for, as I had to deal for the most part with Catholics in the instructions given from the chair of authority, and as I was speaking in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, I considered it to be comparatively useless for the former, and a disrespect to the Latter, to discuss formally the basis of a practical Atheism so abhorrent to the feelings of the Faithful, and so dishonourable to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The present preface, however, affords me an opportunity of saying a word about a phrase which has been repeatedly referred to by me in the conferences that form the second series. It has heretofore been considered by the greatest and wisest of all nations a principle of the natural law that we are bound to worship that one God, Who is revealed to us in the visible creation and in the moral order. Now we are told of *a worship for the*

most part of the silent sort at the altar of the Unknown and the Unknowable.

God, the supreme Ruler of the universe, is represented to us in these words as the Unknown. Now I would venture to ask, to whom is He unknown? Am I to understand that He is unknown to all the generations of men? If so, how comes it that His Name is to be found in nearly every language and tongue under heaven? Surely words are not invented by the universal consent of mankind which, nevertheless, represent no idea, have no significancy. The very definition of language is, that it is a symbol of an objective reality or of an idea. But if God is unknown, the word, *God*, ceases to be symbolical. It represents nothing; and, consequently, as being utterly worthless, should at once be expunged from every vocabulary. That it has retained its place in human speech from the very beginning until now, is a conclusive proof, even were no other producible, that God is not unknown. But again: countless treatises have been written during the course of more than a thousand years,—to say nothing of the revelations made of the Divine Nature and Attributes

in the books of the Old Testament and in the records of ancient literature,—concerning the Essence and Perfections of our God. There are folios still remaining in our libraries,—folios bequeathed to us as well by the ante-Tridentine as by the post-Tridentine schools,—which treat of no other subject. Are all the learned disquisitions which they contain, mere empty words without significancy? Do they not, on the contrary, bear witness to the knowledge of God in the mind of the writers, and, at the same time, convey to such as care to study them those momentous truths of natural and revealed Theology which they contain? Once more: if we glance at the history of nations and races from the very beginning, we shall find that worship occupies there a prominent place, and worship too, for the most part, which includes the idea of expiation. That worship may, in many instances, have been misplaced, superstitious, degraded; but these are excrescences which cannot conceal the primitive truth. It may have taken the form of Polytheism; but Polytheism, submitted to the test of impartial examination, is a witness to the existence of

one God, and to the necessity of the worship of Him. Even the Pagan, as Tertullian has remarked, is naturally Monotheistic.

But it may be said that the author of this unwise and unwholesome paradox intended us to understand by his words that God is unknown to *him*. If this be his meaning, I would fain ply him with a question or two. I would ask: If God is unknown to you, why do you use His Name? To you the word can convey no meaning whatever. If it gives even the idea of His Existence, He is so far forth, at all events, not entirely unknown. If it suggests what others know Him to be, again in such case He is not utterly unknown. When these elements of thought, then, are excluded, of what is the word, *God*, representative? Evidently of nothing; for nothing do you know of Him. Why then are you perpetually using it in essay, lecture, and review? Why do you predicate, make assertions about Him Whom it represents to us? Why will you not let Theists alone? God is not unknown to them, and you will never persuade them that He is. If He is unknown to you, at least

have the modesty to keep your ignorance to yourself.

But we have not as yet mounted to the height of this transcendental philosophy. God, as it would seem, is not only the Unknown but He is also the *Unknowable*. It is not sufficient to assert that He is not known; we must be induced to believe that He cannot be known. If the writer, to whom I refer, had only intended to say that our good God could not be comprehended, his assertion would be orthodox, and he would be merely repeating what Councils, Fathers, Doctors, Theologians, in the Catholic Church have never ceased to inculcate. But this is evidently not his meaning. His statement, fully drawn out, would be, if I mistake not, as follows: *I do not decide the question whether there be a God or no. There may be such a Being; there may not be. If there be, He is not only as a fact unknown, but it is a simple impossibility that men should know Him.* It follows, as an inevitable consequence, that whether He exists or no, is much the same to the human race; for He can have no intelligible relations with man, otherwise we could know something about

Him. Now the arguments, which I have brought to bear on the first assertion, apply *à fortiori* to the second. If it be true that our God is unknowable, whence has arisen in the intellect of man that idea, so universally spread, of which the word, *God*, is representative? Is not the whole human family guilty of a gross absurdity in adorning the Unknowable with a special designation?

Again, as a mere fact of history, was God unknowable to the Jew or the Mahometan, or to Greek philosophy, or to the sages of heathendom? Is He unknowable to Catholics who, for eighteen hundred years, have been living on the contemplation of His excellence, and dying in the hope of seeing His Beauty face to face in the Beatific Vision?

Again : God is an infinite Ocean of Being. But truth is a transcendental property of being ; and it consequently is, in each particular case, of wider or narrower periphery, more or less evident, precisely in proportion as the object contains more or less of being, and is constituted in a higher order. This is the received doctrine of philosophy. It follows from these premisses that our God is *infinitely knowable*

in Himself, because, as He is infinite Being, He is infinite Truth, without any obscurity of limit. Moreover, as He is a pure Spirit, He is for that reason more easily cognizable by the created intellect. It is, therefore, a strange paradox to affirm that He is unknowable. I purposely added, infinitely knowable *in Himself*; because we must bear in mind that in this present life we cannot attain to an *intuitive* knowledge of our God. That is reserved, as our reward, for a future state. Yet reason, no less than the works of His creation, tells us much of God's nature and perfections; for all being, which He made, is either formally or eminently in Him; and we know much of the Cause from Its effects. I know indeed that this school of sciolists makes short work with such cognition of the Divine Nature. It denies the whole doctrine of creation and of causality whether final or efficient, or at the best imprisons them within the enclosure of a universal doubt. But this supplies no just reason for asserting that God is unknowable; though it may justify us in asserting that He is wilfully unknown by those who thus reject the means of knowing Him.

With a like propriety might a man affirm that those *infusoria* which teem in a drop of water are utterly beyond the reach of sight, because he doubts of the efficiency of the microscope and in consequence will not be induced to use it.

In a word, then, if God is alike unknown and unknowable, we have no business to speak of Him, or even to use His Name; for it is sheer folly to talk of that which we do not, and cannot understand.

But, strange to say, this God unknown and unknowable is to receive the homage of our worship. I can indeed understand the worship of an unknown God, since St. Luke has recorded the fact; for he gives us the address of St. Paul on the Areopagus to the Athenian people as follows: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that you are in all things, as it were, too superstitious. For passing by and seeing your idols, I found an Altar also, on which was written, *To the unknown God*. What therefore you worship without knowing it, this I preach to you."* The Athenians, then, did actually worship the Unknown God; but it must be

* Acts xvii. 22, 23.

remembered that for so doing St. Paul accuses them of superstition. Moreover he offers to make known to them Him Whom they ignorantly worshipped. But to worship Him Who is not only the Unknown but the Unknowable surpasses all effort at comprehension. To worship One Who, so far as we are concerned, is a non-entity, is not an act of reason or of wisdom. I am not surprised, therefore, to learn that this worship is *for the most part of the silent sort*; though a silent worship, including, as I must understand it, silence of the inner as of the outer word, seems very like no worship at all.

When will the men of this generation get to learn the truth of the adage, *Non omnia possumus omnes*? When will they realize and own that Theology requires as much intellectual training (to say the least) as osteology or comparative anatomy; and that as a professor of these last-named physical sciences would treat with merited scorn a tyro who would venture to criticize his teacher's theories or oppose his inductions; so a Theologian has a like right to treat with contempt the off-hand assertions of those, however eminent in their

own particular line, who venture upon subjects to the consideration of which they have never been trained, and for whose discussion their peculiar course of study has markedly unfitted them.

But enough of these writers and their scepticism. We may well afford to wait till they have furnished us with something of a theory of their own, supported by reasonable motives of assent, and not waste our time in trying to catch at the intangible, or in bestowing laborious refutation upon gratuitous assertions. In these days it will not do for men to assume the tone of a prophet, or to think to draw to themselves the multitude around them by an unconnected series of negations and doubts. We may well bide our time, and refute, when there is something to be refuted.

My object, then, in the second series of sermons, is to vindicate for our good God His rightful place in the cycle of human thought, and to point out the chaos which must ensue when He is banished from Philosophy or Esthetic. I want more particularly to put Catholics on their guard against the

aggression of a false theory which would fain rob them of their birthright. But I own to a more Catholic purpose. If this volume should fall into the hands of some who are not as yet in the one fold under the one Shepherd, and especially of young men of thought and education, I hope, with God's grace, that they may get to see the intellectual dangers which surround them, and may recognize that the old teaching of Natural Theology is not a mere accumulation of words, but contains the deepest and most solid food for head and heart. The one great peril of the age is its proclivity for practical Atheism. God has been long ago excluded from the daily business of life, from market and exchange, from houses of legislature and courts of law, from social intercourse and political movements; but heretofore He has found a place in the school and lecture room, as well as in the study of the philosopher. The hierophants of the epoch are striving with all their might to exclude Him from these last refuges of truth, and to exile Him altogether from the domain of English thought. Under these circumstances it is the bounden duty of

Catholics to vindicate the rights of God ; to do their best to secure for Him His place in philosophy as the Alpha and Omega of thought, of will, of taste ; to cultivate in themselves and encourage in others the patient and continuous study of Natural Theology. This they are bound to do, according to their power, as a duty they owe to our good God, as a duty they owe to themselves, as a duty they owe to their neighbour and their country. We all know, from the sad example of a neighbouring land, the fate of a people which rejects or ignores its God. Scepticism and an Atheistic tendency of thought do not confine themselves to what is merely speculative. They do not keep to the library. If unhindered, they uproot the foundations of morality and of social and political security, bringing in their wake anarchy, license, barbarism. It is this which now menaces us in England ; and it behoves all those who would be faithful to their God,—each in his proper sphere and according to his ability and opportunity—to do their utmost, in public as in private, to preserve the knowledge and defend the supreme authority of God among their

fellow men. The enemy has proclaimed war, and insultingly provoked us to the combat; let us buckle on our armour, confident in the strength of God, and knowing by the experience of years that *Major est qui in vobis est quam qui in mundo*—"Greater is He that is in you than he who is in the world."*

* 1 St. John iv. 4.

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ON MODERN PRINCIPLES.

SERMON I.

THE LAST WINTER OF THE WORLD.

ROM. xiii. 11.

Scientes tempus ; quia hora est jam nos de somno surgere. Nunc enim prior est nostra salus, quam cum credidimus.

Knowing the season ; that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM * very appositely describes this visible world as the first class-book, which God gave to man for his instruction. It is indeed a plain, intelligible manifestation of Himself and of His illimitable perfections. It is, moreover, a Bible, which needs no printing, no fabrication of versions, for its pages are ever spread open before men of every country and of every age ; and the ignorant, the slave, the child, the poor, can read in that one, universal, language of creation, as well as the learned, the noble, the mature, the rich. *Cæli enarrant gloriam Dei, et opera manuum Ejus annuntiat firmamentum. Dies diei eructat verbum, et nox nocti indicat scientiam. Non sunt loquelæ, neque sermones, quorum non audiantur voces eorum. In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum, et in fines orbis terræ verba eorum* — “The

* Hom. ix., ad Populum Antiochenum.

heavens proclaim the glory of God, and the firmament announces His handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech; and night unto night showeth knowledge. There are no speeches nor languages, where their voices are not heard. Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." *

But the things of nature—this vast universe of God, with its laws of movement, its succession of seasons, its beauty of ornament, its perpetual life—are not only the revelation of a theology properly so called, but they are also symbols, full of meaning, of things invisible and spiritual. The natural order is a divinely ordered type of the supernatural. And as such it has been used by Prophets, and Psalmists, by Christ Himself habitually, after Him by His Apostles, and after these, again, by the Fathers and spiritual writers of the Church. And this usage, at all times natural and appropriate, has become much more so since the great epoch of the Incarnation. For since God has condescended to take to Himself our human nature, and thus to unite matter hypostatically to His own nature, matter has been filled with a new life. It has been sacramentalized, and the curse once laid upon it in great measure removed. What is more, since the real Body of Jesus has gone up to Heaven, matter has taken its high place even on the very throne of God. And, in like manner, in the mystical Body of Jesus it has been so elevated above itself as to have become the instrument of countless graces, and to have developed into the highest forms of

* Psalm xviii. 2—5.

spiritual beauty under the supernatural handling of Christian art, while, in the future of eternity, it shall fill up the vacant places in the Kingdom of the Saints.

It will not then, I trust, be without profit, dearly beloved brethren in Jesus Christ, if I invite you, in company with myself, to contemplate this present season of winter in the spirit of my text, and to give yourself up to the train of thought which it suggests. There are peculiar circumstances in this present year, which is just drawing to its close, that will bring the lesson of winter home to us in a very special manner. The pressing straits of the Church, the persecutions, insult, and treason, to which she is now exposed, the dark, heavy thunder-clouds coming up from the horizon, the uneasy forebodings of the public mind in all countries, the moral condition of human society everywhere, all conspire to lead our thoughts in the same direction. Yes, who can doubt it? It is the winter of the world. Is it the last? or may we look for a renovating spring once more? What are the tokens that such a winter is in our midst? Do the facts of our own experience, the current events of our time, the tone of public thought and action, afford us any special signs of the speedy coming of that "son of perdition, who opposeth, and is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped. . . . Whom the Lord Jesus shall kill with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming?"* This is the subject to which I wish to direct your attention on this, the Fourth Sunday in Advent.

* 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, 8.

“The harvest is passed ; the summer is ended.”* Nay, and autumn, too, is gone. Creation is dead once more. The fruits of the earth have been gathered in long since. And now the corn-fields bristle only with dry, lifeless stubble. The yellow leaves have fallen, and the trees, with their bare branches spread out athwart the dull sky, show like so many tombstones of buried nature. No voice of birds is heard in the thicket or grove ; no lowing of oxen nor bleating of flocks in the meadows. The beasts are shut up in stall and fold. No hum is there of insect life out on the chill wind. Everywhere over the country there broods the mute sadness of a funeral. The grass is no longer green, but brown and parched. The streamlets and ponds yield to the fixed embrace of ice. The rivers glide no more joyously between their banks, but with their sombre, murky mass of waters, pass mournfully onward to the sea. The wide ocean, too, has not its summer dress upon it, but either lies hushed in a sullen silence, broken only by the mournful sob of its waves as they die out on the shore, or is lashed to fury by the howling south-west wind. Not a flower is there peering out for company from bank, or hedge, or field. And the air itself is so cold and raw that men gather their covering around them, and hurry on to keep life stirring within ; and escape, as soon as they can, from the desolation outside to comfort soul and body beside the family hearth. And light has been gradually going from us for the last six months—at first imperceptibly, then faster and faster—till now there

* Jerem. viii. 20.

are scarce eight hours out of the twenty-four which see the light. The day seems to end almost as soon as it has begun, and then follows a long silent night. So here we find ourselves, stripped of nature's visible light and heat and life, looking out in the darkness of our Advent preparation for the Babe of Bethlehem, and His Virgin Mother, and the Christmas cradle.

It is of a truth a solemn season, this season of winter, a solemn preacher. "Knowing the season, that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we at first believed." Yes, it is a solemn preacher. For it preaches of death, and the end of the light of life. It preaches of judgment, and of the outer darkness of hell, and of the pains of Purgatory. It preaches of the second Advent, ere it commemorates the first. But it does more than this. For it teaches us, by symbol, of a season in the world's history most like itself. There is a winter of the year. There shall be a winter of the world. *Orate*, says Christ, the Truth, *ut non fiat fuga vestra in hyeme. . . . Erit enim tunc tribulatio magna, qualis non fuit ab initio mundi usque modo, neque fiet. Et nisi breviati fuissent dies illi, non fieret salva omnis caro*—"Pray that your flight be not *in the winter*. . . . For there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved."* Has this winter of the world come at last? Are we living through the last hours of time? Is "that wicked one about to be revealed?"†

* St. Matt. xxiv. 20—22.

† 2 Thess. ii. 8.

Who shall say? I am no prophet, devout brethren. I do not profess to decipher the Apocalyptic number, or to determine a day which no man knoweth—not the Angels of Heaven—but the Father only.* *Non est vestrum nosse tempora vel momenta, quæ Pater posuit in Sua potestate*—"It is not for us to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in His own power."† There are those who have declared that Antichrist is already born. I will believe it when he appears on the field of history. It is not to our spiritual profit to concern ourselves with these hidden mysteries of God's counsels. But although I ignore all this chronological arrangement of the future, save so far as God Himself shall deign to reveal it, nevertheless it is our duty from time to time—especially when the peculiar condition of the age would seem to suggest it—to inquire, not in a spirit of curiousness, but with humble fear, whether or no the days of Antichrist seem to be approaching. This we may safely do. For Christ and His Apostles have left us numerous signs or tokens, by which we might be able to form a probable opinion. If God had not intended us to busy ourselves about the question, He would not have been at the pains to give us these signs in so great detail. And if I am to judge by those signs, I should be led to conclude that we are getting near to the end of all things. Mind, I do not say that this winter of the world is the last, which shall immediately precede the Judgment. I do not think so. Yet one more great and signal triumph, at all events, awaits the immaculate Spouse of Jesus,

* St. Matt. xxiv. 36.

† Acts i. 7.

His holy Catholic Church. The Jews shall be brought in. Mahometanism will, as I believe, perish; heretical and schismatical nations return in great measure to the centre of faith and unity; and then—that last terrible apostasy. But I *do* think that the spirit of Antichrist is abroad in all 'quarters of the civilized world, and that it is now working and spreading in this country. I *do* think that all is preparing and making itself ready for his future appearing. I *do* think that the devil has a much greater power now than before, because he knows his time is short.* I do believe that we are in the midst of a severe winter, and that spiritual light and heat are at their apogee, so far, at least, as the world is concerned. And I now proceed to give you my reasons.

There has never been an age since the birth of the Christian Church wherein a gross materialism, and a love of the comforts and sensual pleasures of life, have been so universally spread among all classes of society, as the age in which we live. The increased facility which cheapness offers may have helped to stimulate such an appetite, especially among the masses, but it would be irrational to ascribe to this alone the universal prevalence of so marked an epidemic. That the misery exists everywhere, who can doubt? The house, the table, the dress, proclaim it. Workmen nowadays are not contented with what in former times would have been deemed luxuries too expensive for their masters. Merchants strive to rival the magnificence of noblemen. On the

* Apoc. xii. 12.

Sunday or holiday the factory-girl and shop-boy strive to mask their real calling in life by a useless parade of dress and ornament. Each man endeavours to outdo his neighbour in display. And it has been publicly affirmed more than once, as a reason for the admitted unwillingness of young men in the upper classes of society to get married, that the habits of our English ladies have become so luxurious as to make of marriage a bargain too costly for any save the wealthiest.

Again. Whither does the whole tone of public opinion tend, to what does it point as to the special home of its supreme good? Is it not to the funds, to change, the markets, exports and imports? What is its sole touchstone of political worth? Is it the religious temper of the masses? Is it even their general morality? No; none of these. It is to have a good and firm exchequer, a surplus in the budget, general cheapness, and brisk trade. Let a nation have but these, it is placed on a pedestal of fame; let it want these material advantages, it is decried, laughed at, abused, as being behind the age. It would almost seem as if political action were resolving itself into one vast banking transaction.

Then, again, as to education. What a strange meaning is affixed to this word by the men of our generation! The youth of this kingdom, its future promise, the bone and marrow of its eventual stability—how are they for the most part trained? To what one end are their energies and efforts wholly directed? Are they trained to self-discipline? Are intellect, will, heart, feelings, imagination, passions, so developed

into habit, so harmonized by mutual subordination, that they may with a conspiring and constant energy move onward towards that good God, Who is their one only End, for Whom alone they are created? Are the interests of time, and this world and its pleasures, made to take their proper place in utter subordination to the overwhelming interests of the soul and of eternity? Nothing of the sort. These things are practically left to the nursery, or to the chance weekly efficacy of church or meeting-house. The constant, daily, training of the school is directed to this one object—to make boys clever book-keepers, good men of business, to fit them for this present life only, and to train them for the great race of conflicting interests. And thus it is that we create an hereditary succession of materialists.

Again. Place in the midst of this busy world of ours a religious, or ethical, or philosophical enthusiast, by which I mean a man who believes in his system or theory, and is earnest in its propagation. He is full of an idea, which, at all events, raises him above the low greed of money and a degrading absorption in material pursuits, and which carries him on beyond the limits of time and space into the higher region of truth. How is he received, how treated, by this nineteenth century? He is simply set down as unpractical. He is fighting, say the modern seers, for an abstraction. This will never serve in the battle of life, and can find no place in the philosophy of mammon. What we want is something that will tell on change, in the counting-house, the market-place, the shop. Besides, he is a man of one idea.

Well, and he may be ; but so, likewise, are his accusers. And perhaps it would, after all, be better to live on one idea which embodies a truth, than on one idea which begins and ends in a cheque-book.

Yet again. Take a glance at the real preaching of the newspapers. Here, if anywhere, we shall be sure to find the spirit and tone of the age. And what do they contain? You read of markets, exports, imports, crimes against society, the movements of diplomacy, the round of fashion and pleasure. You are overwhelmed with the common sophisms of expediency, or of party politics. Success is openly paraded as the measure of right. The same public acts are praised one day, which are condemned the next. But as for God and His interests—as for a Heaven and a hell—as for the responsibility of man to his Creator—as for the eternal principles of public and private morality—why, there might be no such truths at all, so far as our press is concerned! Except for some weekly notice of royal devotion, or for an occasional attack on whatever is most earnest in the National Establishment, or for a periodical onslaught on the Church of Jesus Christ, or for a register of clerical preferment, our papers too often could, without changing a line, have been as fittingly printed in Pagan Rome as they are now in Christian England.

Once more. Let us gauge the existence of this materialism in the various ranks of society by a practical test. No one certainly can deny, to begin with, that temporal and sensible interests form the staple subject-matter of debate in the Houses of our Legislature. And without doubt it is to a certain

extent fitting and necessary that it should be so. But let any one venture to speak out boldly there on God's side, and to profess that the divine precepts should be the one foundation of all our legislation, and immediately with murmured expressions of astonishment, and probably a call to order, the idea is hushed to silence. Tell the merchant, or the shop-keeper, or the workman, that his hunt after money must have its limits ; that God's eternal law of justice permits not adulteration of food, or usurer's interest, or unreasonable profits ; that such and such a contract or arrangement in business is grievously sinful ; tell him out plainly that God has His claims and His rights in the counting-house and shop and factory, as well as in the place of worship where he goes ; that his actions there as elsewhere are subject to the divine law of morality and the judgment of the Church of Jesus Christ—he will marvel at your superstition, appeal to the superior enlightenment of the age, and will tell you with a querulous sneer that he is a man of moderate views. Confront the young libertine, as he is about to set out for his night's debauch, and warn him that such criminal indulgences are forbidden by the holiness of God ; that he is launching out on a dangerous sea, full of hidden shoals ; that he must one day give a strict account of this night's revel of sin ; that God has created him for better things than mere bestial enjoyment—and with a stare of amazement, or with a derisive laugh, or perhaps even with an angry oath, he will go on his way and pass you by. Am I drawing an exceptional portrait ? No, my dear brethren in Jesus Christ ;

would to God I were! I am setting before you the rule. The exceptions lie the other way. The fact is, that God is shut out for the most part from the real work of life. He receives the Sunday as in a sort of His own by the condescension of an Act of Parliament; but then it is on the condition that for the rest of the week He does not intrude on the business and privacy of life. As for the next world, it will take care of itself when it comes. This present world is the great matter now. Yes, about Heaven and hell, Angels and devils, God and His Saints, men can joke, and sneer, and doubt; for they cannot see them. Who can tell for certain that there are such beings or such places? But money, and compound interest, a vote for city or borough or county, arm-chairs, dinner-parties, smart dresses, a handsome equipage—these are indeed practical realities; because we can see, feel, touch, possess them. Such is the spirit of our times. It lives, and thrives, and grows stout in the midst of comfort and luxury, with its railroads, and steamboats, and electric telegraphs, and free press, and coal-pits; and in these things forsooth professes to discover the practical solution of the great enigma of life.

I look, devout brethren, to my Lord and my Redeemer—the only-begotten Word of the Father, the Brightness of His truth—and I ask Him for a sign of the world's last dreary winter, when faith shall be nearly gone, and the love of God grown cold, and the life of charity dead and unfruitful; and I hear His answer: *Sicut autem in diebus Noe, ita erat et adventus Filii hominis. Sicut enim erant in diebus ante*

diluvium comedentes et bibentes, nubentes et nuptui tradentes, usque ad eum diem, quo intravit Noe in arcam, et non cognoverunt, donec venit diluvium, et tulit omnes; ita erit et adventus Filii hominis—"As in the days of Noe, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, even to that day in which Noe entered into the ark; and they knew not till the flood came, and took them away; so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be."* And again: *Similiter sicut factum est in diebus Lot: Edebant et bibeabant: emebant et vendebant: plantabant et ædificabant: qua die autem exiit Lot a Sodomis, pluit ignem et sulphur de cælo, et omnes perdidit: secundum hæc erit qua die Filius hominis revelabitur*—"Likewise as it came to pass in the days of Lot: They did eat and drink, they bought and sold, they planted and built. And in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed."† You see that in neither of these cases does the Evangelist mention any of their horrible sins. It behoves us to mark this well. The one peculiarity, which in both instances is prominently brought before us, is the utter materialism and sensuality in which the world was then plunged. And it is precisely this peculiarity which constitutes the predicted resemblance between these epochs and the times of Antichrist. Such is the picture of the last days given us by the Incarnate Truth. Eating and

* St. Matt. xxiv. 37—39.

† St. Luke xvii. 28—30.

drinking, marriages, sensual enjoyment, domestic comforts, utter forgetfulness of God, disbelief in God's ministers and God's warnings—these are the things that are to be, as Christ tells us, one of the signs of the world's last winter. If Christ were to come to judgment now, would He, or would He not, find it to be a characteristic of the age, that men's hearts generally are absorbed in matters of eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, planting, building; that all classes of the people are walking to and fro in quest of money, closing their eyes to the chastisements of God's providence, and their ears to the warnings of His Priesthood? Judge ye.

But there is another sign or token of the approach of Antichrist and of the end of all things, which has been given us by our dearest Lord. You will find it recorded, devout brethren, in St. Matthew's Gospel. For it is there written: *Tunc si quis vobis dixerit, Ecce hic est Christus, aut illic, nolite credere. Surgent enim pseudochristi et pseudoprophetae. . . . Ecce Ego prædixi vobis*—"At that time, if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false christs and false prophets. . . . Behold I have told it you beforehand."* Now I would have you to remark that, according to this prophecy of our Lord, the reign of Antichrist will be preceded by a multiplicity not merely of false religions, but of false religions professing to be Christian. Their teachers or ministers will say to the people, as Jesus Christ tells us, Lo, here is Christ with me and my sect, or, Lo, there is Christ with that

* St. Matt. xxiv. 23—25.

particular persuasion to which I belong. These sects will have then the name and exterior profession of a Christian body. There will be so much that is plausible about them—among other things the pretended possession of miraculous gifts—that they will be capable of deceiving, if possible, even the elect or predestined souls of holy Church. Yet after all they will be but false prophets. In a word, the days which shall usher in the last apostasy, will be distinguished by the multiplicity of sects calling themselves Christian. Well, my dearly beloved brethren, has there ever been a time, since the beginning of Christianity, wherein sects abounded to the extent that they do in our day? It requires no special sagacity to discern this. We have but to go up and down this large town to satisfy ourselves of the existence of this note. The great heresy of the so-called Reformation set private judgment a going. And now, not only is the established religion—the parent of the rest—itself torn well-nigh in pieces with conflicting parties, but different sections have been ever, from the beginning of its history, separating off from it. And these in turn have been broken up by intestine quarrels. And so each one has begotten many others, till now it has come to such a pass, that it would take—as indeed it has taken in the official census—pages merely to write down their names. Although then, my brethren, we follow the counsel of Christ, and do not believe them, nor go out to find Christ there, where we know that He cannot be, we must at the same time own that we find among ourselves this second sign of the last winter of this world.

The Apostles of our Lord and Saviour have added other notes to those which are given us, as we have seen from the lips of the Divine Teacher. St. Paul thus warns us: *Hoc autem scito, quod in novissimis diebus instabunt tempora periculosa. Erunt homines seipsos amantes, cupidi, elati, superbi, blasphemi, parentibus non obediētes, ingrati, scelesti, sine affectione, sine pace, criminales, incontinentes, immites, sine benignitate, proditores, protervi, tumidi, voluptatum amatores magis quam Dei; habentes speciem quidem pietatis, virtutem autem ejus abnegantes. . . . Semper discētes, et nunquam ad scientiam veritatis pervenientes*—"Know also this, that in the last days, shall come on dangerous times. *Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without affection, without peace, slanderers, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness, traitors, stubborn, puffed up, and lovers of pleasures more than of God: having an appearance indeed of godliness, but denying the power thereof. . . . Ever learning, and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth.*"* Thus, too, speaks St. Peter in his second Catholic Epistle: *Venient in novissimis diebus in deceptione illusores, juxta proprias concupiscentias ambulantes*—"In the last days there shall come *deceitful scoffers, walking after their own lusts.*"† And again the same Apostle thus describes the votaries of the coming Antichrist: *Qui post carnem in concupiscentia immunditię ambulant, dominationemque contemnunt, audaces, sibi placentes, sectas non metuunt introducere, blasphemantes . . . oculos habentes plenos*

* 2 Tim. iii. 1—7.

† 2 St. Peter iii. 3.

*adulterii, et incessabilis delicti. Pellicientes animas instabiles, cor exercitatum avaritia habentes. . . . Superba vanitatis loquentes, pelliciunt in desideriis carnis luxuriæ eos, qui paululum effugiunt, qui in errore conversantur: libertatem illis promittentes, cum ipsi servi sint corruptionis—“Who walk after the flesh in uncleanness, and despise government, audacious, self-willed, they fear not to bring in sects, blaspheming . . . having eyes full of adultery and of ceaseless sin; alluring unstable souls, having a heart practised in covetousness, . . . speaking proud words of vanity, they allure by the desires of fleshly riotousness, those who for a little while escape, such as converse in error; promising them liberty, whereas they themselves are the slaves of corruption.”** And St. Jude in his Epistle confirms the teaching of St. Peter. For he says, *Quoniam in novissimo tempore venient illusores, secundum desideria sua ambulantes in impietatibus. Hi sunt qui segregant semetipsos, animales, Spiritum non habentes—“In the last time there shall come mockers, walking according to their own desires in ungodliness. These are they who separate themselves, animal men, having not the Spirit.”†*

I verily believe that if we wanted a photograph of the age in which we live, we could not hope to find a better or more exact one than that which is given us by these three Apostles of our Lord. I do not say that all the features correspond with the public tone of England, or that any of them belong to England exclusively. Nor again do I deny that there are

* 2 St. Peter ii. 10, 14, 18, 19.

† St. Jude 18, 19.

most hopeful signs of a regeneration in our midst. But this is due, under God, to the daily-increasing influence of the Catholic Church acting on the higher instincts of a great and noble people. But that the prevailing tone of thought and life in this country is very much what has been described in these texts of Holy Scripture, is what I firmly believe. It would be a task too distressing and ungrateful, were I to attempt to dress each point of the accusation. And moreover I shall have in the course of these sermons to allude to much which will recall to mind the Apostles' words. I hope therefore to attain my purpose indirectly ; and to direct your thoughts to the fountain, whence must of necessity flow the whole future character of a people. The education of youth forms the man ; the bearing of the man forms the family ; the spirit of the family forms the State. "Train up a child according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it."* Education recalls to us the spiritual and ethical tone of the teacher and the taught. And the philosophy of our modern education contains within itself the type of the model man of this nineteenth century.

Education necessarily embraces both intellectual and moral training ; in other words, the due development of the intellect, and the due development of the will. We will just glance at each separately ; for we have no time for more than a glance. It is a confessed fact that, while what our modern sciolists call education has been perseveringly extended amongst the mass of our people, nevertheless such mental

* Proverbs xxii. 6.

training is at the best rudimentary, and merely instrumental. Reading, writing, book-keeping, mental or other arithmetic, elementary geography, and a series of historic facts and dates, are doubtless very good things in their place. But these, even taken collectively, do not constitute mental education. They are mere instruments for good or evil, according to the way we use them. The real work of education has yet to be done. And it is in effect begun among the English masses only after the boy has turned his back on the school-door. And who are then his masters? I answer, Newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, novels, and mechanics' institutes. Our "free press," in a word, is the real schoolmaster. And English youth, nursed in all its shallow dogmatism, its continued self-contradictions, its prejudices, sophisms, its conflicting and ready-made judgments even about moral and religious truths the most sacred and immutable, its self-sufficient criticism and its tone of infallibility—our youth, I repeat—what must become of them, nursed in such a chaos of crude thought? The Apostles, whom I have quoted, tell us. They are ever learning, never coming to the knowledge of *the* truth. They ape the tone of their master. They become pert, stubborn, self-willed, proud, lovers of themselves and of their own hastily-adopted opinions, mockers, deriding the sober and well-tried wisdom of the past, puffed up with their useless scraps of knowledge; often too blasphemers, copying in their dreary conversation the flippant ribaldry of their bible—the newspaper or weekly journal which they read. The most sacred mysteries are profaned by their sneers.

God's holy Church, His Sacraments, His creed, fare no better than does the solid teaching of antiquity. Everything, human and divine, must bow down before the omnipotence of private judgment—and such a private judgment too! God's acts and words must be criticised like those of statesmen, philosophers, men of science. Mere upstarts arise to interpret the Bible, and shape a creed, and determine a ritual. So men fear not to bring in sects, blaspheming. Objective truth retires behind a cloud; and human thought at last collapses into one huge, dreary negation. And the popular mind feeds contented on platitudes, gaily garnished with pleasantries and a ringing style of writing. So the press, while it nurses this superficial and conceited dogmatism, is also the truest reflex of its presence in what is called public opinion. What a mental education for a people!

What then am I to say of the moral part of education—of the education of the will? This is no small or unimportant question; for the whole life of a man, properly so called, depends upon his will. It is here resides his freedom. Here it is that the main-spring of action—and action is man's life—is to be found. How does this nineteenth century educate the will of the child? A sort of worldly, respectable, outside morality—enough to pass muster in the world—it may give; but the heart and centre of action it cannot touch. For it cannot get inside. And it has no authority to get there. Secrets that are in a boy's heart, which your national schoolmaster cannot near—a war of passion, of which he knows not one syllable—

habits forming, which are as invisible to his eye as the world of spirits—these are just the matters about which his scholar will never let him into his confidence; and yet which put the boy's whole after-life out of joint. Yes, he is a noble, affectionate, open boy, you will tell me; manly, winning, frank, clever. This may be very true, so far as it goes. But if that is all you know, you know little indeed about him. For all the while, poor soul, he is being eaten up with impurity; because he has no one to whom he can venture to betake himself for sympathy, relief, and cure. He has no confessional where his sad secret is safe, where he could find an easy outlet for his miseries, and where God would heal, and, healing, educate him by His Sacrament. He has been brought up to hate the very mention of the word confession. And so he goes out into life, like an apple fair to look upon, but rotten to the core. His whole moral being has been already blasted by the deadly blight of lust. Thrown thus entirely upon himself and his own weakness and frailty, with a powerful habit playing the tyrant with him, what chance is there for the liberation and education of his will? The confessional is the only school for him, and by the prejudices which you and your free press have instilled, you have barred its door against him. What is the inevitable result upon your youth? Why it is this. They must grow up to be self-willed and sensual. They become lovers of pleasures more than of God. They walk after their own lusts—walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness; or as St. Jude says, "they walk according to their own desires in ungodlinesses."

What else can you expect, when you imprison a man in a cage with a troop of hungry wild beasts, and trust to the turn up of chances that he will not be devoured? You cannot educate the will yourselves, and yet you do the best you can to hinder the Church from doing it for you by an authority innate in her; for you and your schools impossible. And you admit in your more honest moments—though you cannot arrest—the consequences. Sins of uncleanness—for which by far the greater number of Christians who are lost eternally, will find themselves in the torments of hell—are the rule, not the exception. This is a patent fact, which statistics, newspapers, courts of law, combine to illustrate and confirm. But such witnesses cannot, from the nature of the case, get at more than one instance out of ten thousand that are never known. Nevertheless, to illustrate what I have said by one most striking example. What in the whole history of pagan crime can surpass the revelations—half hinted at, made, as it were, by accident—of the normal state of our casual wards? One night's glance was enough to make the whole head sick and the whole heart faint. Yet in such a very hell upon earth as it has been described to be, you have only the picture of one workhouse for one night out of the three hundred and sixty-five. And this is one of the fair fruits, I suppose, of what people call our modern civilization—of the wondrous light of the nineteenth century! This is the new way of educating the poor! Yet without a particle of shame men talk as glibly as before about the darkness of the middle ages, and our glorious emancipation as a people from

the trammels of Rome. This is the harvest, which they are gathering in, of the so-called Reformation. Do I then combine the two facts, or find a connection between them? Yes, I do.

What then is the ethical formation of this wonderful age of enlightenment? It turns out its youth without a creed, and with morals sapped to their foundation. Polish they may have, natural qualities too they may have, winning and lovable. Yes, fair Dead Sea fruits, which turn to ashes when we gather them. And if man's relation to himself, if his moral being is a simple wreck, what must become of his relations to the family? Surely we need no prophet to tell us. However, let us see the lesson which is taught us by recent legislation? It is this. The very corner-stone of the domestic life is unsafe, rotten. Why is it that here in England we have recklessly imitated the unchristian innovation of certain foreign Governments, and legalized adultery (for such it is in the infallible judgment of the Church) by our Divorce Bill? Is it not sufficiently plain, if the ever-increasing business of the divorce court is allowed as evidence, that fidelity to the marriage vow is becoming more and more rare as years go on? Yet if this, the foundation of domestic life and domestic unity be weakened, the whole spirit of the family must fall into irretrievable ruin. Ah! you have done your best to withdraw marriage from the sacramental grace of the sanctuary. You have degraded it to the level of a mere civil contract. The State has dared to legislate, where the Church of Christ has the sole legitimate authority of judgment.

Adultery and infanticide crop up. And public opinion stares wildly at these dismal portents, and can imagine no better remedy for the evil than to close its eyes.

If a man's nature is warped and spoilt in his ethical and domestic life by a wholly defective education, if the complex commonwealth of faculties is reduced to total anarchy, if he has been ill-trained to fulfil his duties as a man and as member of a family—how can it be hoped that he will become a good citizen, and discharge his political obligations so as to satisfy the truest and highest interests of his family? The conceit of a false wisdom, and the excesses of private judgment, have long ago destroyed within him all reverence for authority other than that of brute force. He has never been led to recognise a representative of God in actually constituted government. Indeed, if he ever had such an idea it has been long laughed out of him. He has been taught to regard himself and his fellows—not God—as the source and centre of political power. He has witnessed from his earliest days that the shafts of irony and sneer and sarcastic criticism have been habitually directed against every institution, order, or dignity above him, and he in turn has learnt to do the same. What is the result, as it manifests itself now before our eyes throughout the civilized world? All principles of public justice are fast disappearing. Might is right. Expediency, in its lowest sense, and success, have become the only tests of political morality. Standing armies occupy the place of congresses. Insurrection, revolution, unjustified appropriation of countries which belonged

to friendly States—these have become a sort of law among the nations and peoples of Europe. Every time-honoured dignity, every diplomatic act, every law, is criticised, decried, turned into contempt on one side or other. Every State is honeycombed with secret societies, which are fatal to its stability, and destructive of all security. Thus we live among men whose glory it is to be traitors, despisers of government; men who speak proud words of vanity, promising their fellow-citizens liberty, whereas they themselves are the slaves of corruption. England, it is true, has more or less escaped the epidemic as yet. She is not Catholic, and may therefore bide her time. But when the emissaries of evil have done their worst in Italy, Spain, Austria, France, and Belgium, let but the occasion offer. Let deficient harvests, and pestilence among the beasts of the field and the fruits of the earth, and political agitation, disturb the popular mind and incline it to revolt; we shall soon see, perhaps to our cost, whether these sworn conspirators against every throne and altar in Europe will generously spare what had been once their too-confiding asylum.

Surely then, dearly beloved brethren in Jesus Christ, we are in the midst of the world's winter. Light has almost gone from the earth. Darkness and cold have come over the nations. All is in apparent confusion and disorder. He must indeed be but a superficial reader of passing events, who does not tremble for those things which are coming on the earth. Wars and rumours of wars, revolution, unjust usurpation, a deluge of sin—these are the

harvest which the new philosophy is reaping. Meanwhile, God's judgments are abroad. Even in our own kingdom a detestable conspiracy has been attempting to do what we have encouraged, by our diplomacy, only too successfully in a foreign land. And, amidst all these terrors, the one only pillar upon which true modern civilization can hope to rest, the corner-stone of true liberty and order, the ark of refuge, the salvation of the world, is being driven from its place in the family of nations, amidst the evident but unheeded signs of God's wrath. The Powers of Europe, instigated by the great enemy of God and man, have banded together, by action or connivance, to displace the Lord's anointed from his oldest throne in Europe. Peter's bark is out on the wave, and the prince of the power of the air has raised up storm and tempest against it. Alas! for the world, and the Kings and Princes, who are guilty of this great transgression! Alas! for the people who indolently allow it! But for ourselves, my brethren, let these signs of the world's old age and approaching dissolution urge us, in the words of the Apostle, *de somno surgere*—"to wake out of sleep." Let us reform what is amiss in ourselves. Let us keep closer to God than heretofore. Let us remain steadfast in the faith, while the earth quakes, and reels to and fro like a drunken man; while stars fall from heaven; while the sun is darkened; while Angels pour out the vials of their wrath. This winter, too, shall pass, and give place to the resurrection of an eternal spring. Let us then be up and doing. "The night is far spent; the day is at hand."

Let prayers and mortifications be more frequent, confessions and communions more common. Let the sinner make his peace with God, and the good become more Saint-like, "for now is our salvation nearer than when first we believed."

SERMON II.

THE FIRST AND SECOND ADVENT THE MEASURE
OF MODERN PRINCIPLES.

DANIEL v. 27.

Thecel ; appensus es in statera, et inventus es minus habens.

Thecel ; thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting.

IF there be a God in Heaven, Who is our Creator, Preserver, and the final End for which we were created, it must inevitably follow that man's true life and only happiness consists in the possession of God. And if the possession of God be the only true happiness and life of the individual man, such too must be the end at which all political government of whatever kind should aim. Even heathen philosophy teaches us thus much ; so deeply is this two-fold truth impressed on the rational instincts of our common nature. The great philosopher of antiquity tells us at the beginning of his Ethics, that man's happiness, which is the end of the moral science, consists in the possession of the supreme, perfect, and incomparable Good ; which, of course, if there be a creating God, all-perfect and self-existent, must be He. But he makes another very

important remark, which bears an intimate relation with the idea which I purpose to develop on the present occasion. He says that the end of the moral science is also the end of the political; for what is the end of one man must of necessity be the end of a body or multitude of men. In other words, the State, if it would wish to fulfil its high and noble office, must direct and aid its citizens to energize for, and aim at, the possession of God, in like manner as each man must energize for, and aim at, such possession.

That which natural reason teaches, Revelation confirms with its own paramount authority. The incarnate Truth—the living Brightness of the Father's wisdom—the God-Man—infallible Teacher of a Divine moral philosophy—speaks not only to the individual, but to all nations and governments and kingdoms, and says to them, *Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et in tota anima tua, et in tota mente tua. Hoc est maximum et primum mandatum*—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment."* And nature, visible as well as invisible, the voice of conscience, the yearnings of the soul, the experience of history, the demonstrative evidence of metaphysical science, and the unerring declarations of revealed truth, combine to teach us that "the Lord hath made all things for Himself"†—that God is the one great object of all our energies, and the possession of Him our only happiness and perfection.

* St. Matt. xxii. 37, 38.

† Proverbs xvi. 4.

For this purpose was Jesus Christ born on the first Christmas-day; that He might enforce upon us the necessity of gaining that great end; that He might enable us to attain it; that He might teach us, first by example and then by precept, *how* to attain it. He came as Light from Heaven to dispel the dark night of sensuality and materialism in which the face of the earth was shrouded. He came to unbind the bonds of sin, and to give us strength to get to God. And He stood in our midst—the model Man, the Divine Teacher. He taught us the true life of man in His instructions, and He acted out the life Himself as our Pattern. He shall come again, not to teach but to judge. Yet His judgment will be the great seal of His teaching. The same truths form the sermon of the first and second Advent. In the first He laid the foundation of a great moral regeneration; in the second He shall consummate it. The living principles which He taught in the first Advent, He shall confirm before an assembled world in His second Advent. It is surely, then, worth while to weigh modern principles in this balance of the Sanctuary. Popular principles form national, properly so called; and national in turn foster and perpetuate popular principles. The public tone, the practical life, in England, are preparing its future destinies; and are either furthering or marring God's intentions and England's welfare. My dear brethren in Jesus Christ, I say it with deep pain,—but say it I must,—the popular principles which have grown up in our midst are anti-Christian, and can never endure the coming pressure. They

are, therefore, fatally injurious to the great nation of which we are members, and wrest out of its hands that true happiness which is the common birthright of all Christian kingdoms. Yes, of a truth, this nineteenth century, with all its boasted illumination and so-called progress and civilization, is weighed in the balance and found wanting. *Thecel; appensus es in statera, et inventus es minus habens.* Such, devout brethren, is my theme this evening.

If I look upon the cradle of the Christmas Child, guarded as it is by the Immaculate Mother and the holy Patriarch St. Joseph, my intellect is at once arrested—I may say, prostrated—by an overwhelming light from Heaven. That light is gathered up, as it were, into a focus of glory by the dear Child's prophetic name, Emmanuel—*i.e.*, God with us. In the virtue of this name the cradle of Bethlehem becomes the temple of a spiritual dogma, of a most momentous fact, on which hinges the whole future of history. For it contains a Babe, Who is at once God and Man. It incloses the Incarnation, so to speak, and the hypostatic union. In that manger is contained the Uncontainable, is limited the Illimitable. At the very outset the Infant Messiah lifts Himself from His humble crib to appal and subjugate the license of human thought by the most mysterious of His heavenly paradoxes. Here in the stable the Eternal Son of God—God of God, very God of very God—has been born into the world as the Baby Son of a Virgin of Judah. God—hear it, O heavens, and give ear, O earth—has become one of ourselves, our Brother—flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone.

He has come to the rescue. He has come to infuse into infected humanity, by virtue of His own indwelling there, a supernatural life, whereby all men may with ease, if they will, attain to the vision of God and the unutterable bliss of Heaven. Henceforth this beautiful and wondrous Incarnation becomes an everlasting fact, an objective reality, a spiritual truth of the highest order. The course of ages, the progress of thought, the perfecting of human science, the inventions of art, cannot change it. It is immutable, as God is immutable. No triumphs of war can affect it. No Act of Parliament can reverse it. No vote of an insurgent democracy can undo it. It was arranged, in God's unchanging counsels of love, a whole eternity before man, or earth, or heaven, was created. And it is an infinite truth, as living at this day as it was nineteen hundred years ago; as true in England now, as it was in Bethlehem then. If it be otherwise, the whole of Christianity becomes a sham, or, at the best, one of the many developments of mere human philosophy. If we are Christians, that truth is our truth; as sure, as momentous, as living, as the existence of God. And round that great truth of the Incarnation, as round a sun, revolves a large constellation of other spiritual and mysterious truths, which the Christmas Child came down from Heaven to reveal. There we behold the mystery of the eternal and undivided Trinity, three Persons and one God. There too we find the doctrine of the fall of man; of the existence of Angels and devils; of the whole economy of grace and redemption; of the institution and power of

the Church; of the supremacy of Peter and his Successors; of the Divine ordering and number of the Sacraments; of the existence of a Heaven and a hell; of a universal judgment; with many others, which were I to attempt to catalogue, time would fail me. They are, moreover, truths which are quite independent of us. God has set them as lights in the firmament of His new heaven. Nay, one of them is the Divine expression of God's own incomprehensible Being. They are none of them contingent truths. They do not depend on man, or man's judgment. They are as unchanging and objective as God Himself.

But I have something more to say about them. They are not mere speculations, which concern us not. They are not only a philosophy offered to the contemplation of the student. They practically concern us all. For God requires our unhesitating assent to these truths as a primary condition of our salvation. *Qui crediderit, et baptizatus fuerit, salvus erit; qui vero non crediderit, condemnabitur*—"He who believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; whoso believeth not, shall be damned."* *Sine fide autem impossibile est placere Deo*—"Without faith it is impossible to please God."† It is evident then at once, that it is of the highest necessity for us to know precisely what these truths are, to be able to distinguish them from their counterfeits. In the natural order of things this is the most momentous, the most practical, the first duty of our lives. Our whole eternity depends upon it. It is quite worth

* St. Mark xvi. 16.

† Hebrews xi. 6.

while—nay, it is a merely rational prudence—to give up everything, money, lands, comforts, home, friends, fame, position, all that the world can offer, if we can thereby discover that one only creed which Christ has left us to be the object of our faith. It is really of infinitely higher importance than our business, or our ledgers, or the state of the funds, or the fluctuations of markets, or the political gossip of the hour. Such things as these are the mere trifles of time. Faith begins on earth the vision of Heaven.

Such is the balance which I find in the cradle of Bethlehem, in the first Advent of the world's Redeemer. Such, too, the weights destined for the one scale, when we and our works shall be placed in the other. And if I betake myself to the second Advent, when the same Christ shall come in glory and great majesty to judge the living and the dead, I find the same balance and the same weights. Picture to yourselves, my brethren, the solemn manifestations of that last day, which is coming as surely as it is sure that God is Truth. Conceive to yourselves that melting of the elements with fervent heat, that terrible darkness of sun and moon, the stars falling from heaven, the general conflagration of this earth of ours with its cities and markets and emporiums of commerce, the roaring of the sea and waves as the devouring flames rush onward to lick them up. Imagine you see the Angel standing with one foot on the sea and the other on the land, and proclaiming with a loud voice that time shall be no longer.* Hear

* Apoc. x. 5, 6.

the blast of the Archangel's trumpet calling all the generations of men to judgment. And, at the sound of that terrible summons, lo! a universal earthquake bursts open the sepulchres of the dead. The sea, too, gives up its multitudes. And the vast concourse hurries on in countless myriads to the valley of Josaphat.* They crowd around the throne of Him Who is about to pronounce judgment,—their Incarnate God. I see them divide off into two for ever separated bodies, the one passing to the right, the other to the left, of the inexorable Judge. The question of a whole eternity is about to be decided. And in the midst of the solemn silence which precedes the irrevocable sentence, methinks I hear a voice which says: *Nec aliud nomen est sub cælo datum hominibus, in quo oporteat nos salvos fieri*—"There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved,"† save the name of Jesus. And again: *Qui non crediderit, damnabitur*—"Whosoever has not believed, shall be damned." In that tremendous hour, whatever false opinions or false principles may have enslaved you, my dear hearers, up till then,—in that tremendous hour, I say, you will at last acknowledge (though, alas! if you reserve the acknowledgment till then, it will be too late), that the possession of the one true faith is of infinitely higher importance than the costliest prizes which the world can offer in the great lottery of life.

Now turn we to the pet principles of the age, as we find them, either expressed or implied, in the press, and our popular literature, and in our popular

* Joel iii. 2.

† Acts iv. 12.

assemblies. They are dressed up, it is true, in the alluring garb of a thoroughly English style. There lurks round about them much that is conciliating, winning, frank. They glitter and dazzle our eyes, with an apparent largeness of mind and a specious refinement of thought and feeling. Nevertheless, I am still compelled to say—"Thecel; thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting." Examine attentively the whole sum of our practical English philosophy and theology, as it is set before us by the voice of public opinion. How can I better describe it than in the following pithy sentence by which it has been stereotyped: "There is nothing new. There is nothing true. And it doesn't matter." We have long survived the superstition of a Creed. Any religion that enforces on its disciples a belief in a definite number of objective truths is a thing of the past. It has faded away, it would seem, before the earnestness and perspicacious liberalism of modern civilization. What does it matter whether there are three Persons or no in one God? Such subtleties can have no practical bearings on the current of men's lives. They cannot affect the stock-exchange, or stimulate the markets. Whether the Bible be the Word of God or the word of man, is a legitimate subject of intellectual inquiry, or even of philosophical doubt. A doctrine of Sacraments, of a divinely-commissioned hierarchy, of a supernatural grace really indwelling in the soul, is an invention of Priests for the purpose of enthralling the human conscience, quite inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the new gospel. The supposed existence of devils,

actively working amid the throng of men, and at times exercising a preternatural power over mind and body, is the mere creation of a childish and superstitious fancy. No longer is it allowed before ears polite to talk of the existence of an eternal hell. The present age will not endure the restraint of a real revelation. It has the sense to see that a Divine revelation and private judgment are incompatible in the same field of thought. One of the two must go. So it prefers to part with the former. Accordingly we are told that Christianity is philanthropy, liberty, civilization. Religion is only a sentiment, a feeling of the heart, good moral conduct, nothing more. Let schoolmen and theological pedants dispute about abstract doctrines or empty words. It is their trade. But laymen do not want these things. The world is sick of conflicting creeds, and the jargon of dogmatic theology. True religion belongs to the heart, not to the head. Let a man be only honest to his own convictions, and that creed is the true one for him which he judges to be true. Should the objection be raised that Jesus Christ and His Apostles are always insisting on the absolute necessity of faith, these prophets of the new Christianity run for refuge to the Lutheran definition, and in this way cobble up, by the aid of an effete heresy, the unmended holes in their easy-going scepticism.

The general spirit of the masses in our country is precisely similar. How wearisome have become, by their mere repetition, such phrases as these: "Religion is a matter between man and his God." Or again, "There are many ways to Heaven, but they all lead

there in the end." Or, "We agree about essentials ; on the rest we can agree to differ." Again, "God will not judge us for what we think, but for what we do." Or, "Every man has a right to follow his own convictions." Or again, "What was good enough for my fathers is good enough for me." Or, "Really there is so much dissension among Christians, that one does not know what to believe." "I was not born to be a theologian. I strive to live honestly, as things go, and bring up my children in a respectable way. I don't swear or get drunk. That's *my* religion."

Others again there are—and their name is legion—who are more undisguised in their rationalism. If you tell them that it is the teaching of the inspired Scriptures, and has been the teaching of the whole Church from the beginning, that baptism washes the soul from sin, and causes it to be born again to God ; or that under the veil of the accidents of bread and wine Christ is really and truly present ; or that the Priest can forgive sins ; they do not condescend to examine whether the Bible teaches these truths or no, whether the Church has really taught these truths from the beginning. They go a shorter way to work. The whole question is sent up for determination to the tribunal of their own individual reason. They do not stop even to inquire whether God has really said so. This matters little. Anyhow, they will not accept such doctrines, unless they can convince themselves that they are in accordance with their common-sense. So they remark for the most part as follows, after the pattern of the unbelieving

Jews—"How can these things be? How can a little drop of water cleanse the soul from sin? It is absurd." Yet they dare not deny that God *can* do it, if He please. It is a mere question of evidence; and the evidence they will not discuss. So again they say, *Quomodo potest Hic nobis carnem Suam dare ad manducandum?*—"How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" *Durus est hic sermo, et quis potest cum audire?*—"This is a hard saying, and who can hear it?"* "How can Christ be in so small a host?" Or again they object, *Quid Hic sic loquitur? Blasphemat. Quis potest dimittere peccata, nisi solus Deus?*—"Why does this Man speak thus? He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins, but God only?"† In a word, they will not believe, because they cannot see, touch, feel. Yet is it of the essence of faith that its object should be enveloped in cloud, and that, in consequence, the intellect of man should be forced to recline with unhesitating confidence on God's truth, on God's authority, on God's veracity. It is, then, impossible to deny that the whole tendency of modern thought is to hide dogma out of sight; to affect a lofty contempt for it; to be generously liberal with what is not its own, *i.e.*, with God's truth; to settle the disputes of Christian communions and controversies of faith by the easy argument of a newspaper sneer; to abuse the Pope, and run him down, because he is the sole living representative of a dogmatic creed; and to close the doors of the family and the State against the unwelcome intrusion of a revealed religion. Yet what is this but to put

* St. John vi. 53, 61.

† St. Mark ii. 7.

practically the world above God, time above eternity, the informed intellect above its informing object, common-sense above divine mysteries, the State above the Church?

Well, all I can say about it is this. If our modern philosophy be true, Christianity is a lie. If there is no immutable dogma, there is no revelation from God, and man has been left to himself and his own devices. The Bible is a human philosophy having no more authority than that of Aristotle, or Plato, or Pythagoras. Mahometanism stands on an equal footing with the Christian system. If private judgment is to decide all, religious worship is itself a mere matter of opinion, and the State has no right to enforce the observance of Sunday, or to establish any form of ritual. Poor, miserable, deserted creatures of some unknown Creator, we have been born in the midst of a thick mist, without a ray of light from heaven to guide us. If modern thought is going the right way, there is nothing like a definite eternity before us. We may die like dogs, and be buried out of sight, and—who knows?—perhaps out of being. Verily it were best for us to take up at once with the theory which certain modern naturalists have offered us, and to acknowledge ourselves to be civilized apes, the highest known effort of matter in its process of development and self-organization. Happy philosophy! Triumphant panacea for the doubts, distresses, woes, of a sorrowing, agitated age! Ah! public opinion, spite of that nervous English style in which thou findest a voice, spite of thy boasted liberalism, the polish and gentleness of

thy scepticism, thou art already judged by Him Who judgeth all things. "Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting." The spirit of INDIFFERENTISM, which is thy first plague-spot, finds no place for itself in the cradle of Bethlehem, or in the final commendation of the Supreme Judge of quick and dead.

This, then, my dearly beloved brethren in Jesus Christ, is the great *intellectual* blot of the present age. It is given up to a mournful indifferentism as regards religious and revealed truth.

Turn we now to its *moral* aspect; and see whether, in this respect at all events, it will bear to be weighed in the balance with the first and second Advent.

I will invite you once more to the cradle of Bethlehem. We shall find there three dear companions of Jesus, who never forsook Him till His sacred Body was laid in the new tomb. These three friends were, Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. I want you to know them well; so I shall present them to you one by one, that you may remember the features of each.

I would have you bear in mind, my hearers (for it is most important to my argument that you should do so), how that the Christmas Child is the everlasting, all-wise God. He could, had He so willed, have ordered it in His omnipotent providence, that Mary, His Blessed Mother, should have been a Queen, living in a rich and luxurious palace with all the conveniences of life, with a vast retinue of servants, and surrounded by all the comforts that money could procure. And in such case without a

doubt the circumstances of His birth would, in the eyes of the world, have been more in accordance with the dignity of His office as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He who denies that Christ could have done so must by the very fact deny that He is God. For God can do all things. Well, did He as a fact so arrange it? And if He did not do so, why did He not do it?

My answer to the first question shall be to ask you to go with me to look at Him in His cradle. I find Him just born in a stable, where cattle had been kept. Why is He there? His Mother and reputed father were so poor, that none of their relatives then living at Bethlehem would admit them into their houses. The inn was full, and its occupants not disposed to make room for so humble a family, so the young, way-worn Virgin, just about to become a mother, is forced to retire into the stable, to manage there as best she could. And it was there—in a cave exposed to the winds of heaven, cold, comfortless, and dark—that Jesus, our Life, was born. His only cradle was the manger which served to hold the fodder of the cattle; His swaddling-clothes a few poor pieces of linen; His little bed, some straw, with perhaps a handful of hay, which the pious care of Joseph had gathered from the ground. No attendance of servants, no fire, no bright lights, no rejoicing relatives collected together to welcome the nativity of the little Stranger. Such was the manner of the birth of Him, Who was Emmanuel, God with us.

Did He then change this humble ordering of His life in after years? He never did. He willed to pass

thirty years out of thirty-three in a small workshop of Nazareth, as a carpenter's apprentice. And even during those last three years and better of His public ministry He could say, *Vulpes foveas habent, et volucres cæli nidos: Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput reclinet*—"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head."* On His Cross He was stripped of everything save His wounds and tortures; and the very cincture that covered His loins was a friendly loan. My first question then is surely answered. And now for the second. You ask me why He did not arrange to be born in opulence and comfort? You want to know why He voluntarily chose so abject a state of poverty? I answer, because this was a fundamental part of His Gospel, and He willed to teach it first of all by His own bright example. He came to preach poverty. He came to make of poverty a heavenly virtue. *Beati pauperes*—"Blessed are ye poor."† *Pauperes evangelizantur*—"The poor are evangelized."‡ And He began by giving us a pattern.

As regards the second Advent He gives us a sufficiently plain intimation of the future Judgment in the touching story of Dives and Lazarus. There is nothing that is disgraceful, as the world would say, recorded of the former; no flagrant vice of impurity or injustice. It is only told of him that he was clothed in purple, fared sumptuously every day, and was hard on the poor. Yet he is in hell. Again, in the Apocalyptic vision the great harlot of the last days is thus described: *Mulier erat circumdata*

* St. Luke ix. 58. † St. Luke vi. 20. ‡ St. Matt. xi. 5.

purpura, et coccino, et inaurata auro, et lapide pretioso, et margaritis, habens poculum aureum in manu sua, plenum abominatione, et immunditia fornicationis ejus

—“The woman was clothed round about with purple and scarlet, having a golden cup in her hand, full of the abomination and filthiness of her fornication.”*

Listen to the more direct teaching of an Apostle: *Agite nunc, divites, plorate ululantes in miseriis vestris, quæ advenient vobis. Divitiæ vestræ putrefactæ sunt; et vestimenta vestra a tineis comesta sunt. Aurum et argentum vestrum æruginavit: et ærugo eorum in testimonium vobis erit; et manducabit carnes vestras sicut ignis. Thesaurisastis vobis iram in novissimis diebus*

—“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries, which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you; and shall eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up wrath for yourselves against the last day.”† In truth, the whole spirit of the New Testament echoes the solemn words of the Redeemer, *Non potestis Deo servire et mammonæ*—“You cannot serve God and mammon at one and the same time.”‡ Have you still a doubt remaining about the teaching of Christ? Listen once more to these terrible words of His, which we dare not set down to exaggeration: *Quam difficile, qui pecunias habent, in regnum Dei intrabunt. Facilius est enim camelum per foramen acus transire, quam divitem intrare in regnum Dei*—“How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God. It is

* Apoc. xvii. 4. † St. James v. 1—3. ‡ St. Matt. vi. 24.

easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.”*

Such is the teaching of the Gospels; such the teaching of the Epistles. If Christianity is a truth, then is it also true that poverty, since Jesus Christ adopted it, has become an inestimable blessing—I might truly say, a sacramental state; and riches are a real burden, a hindrance, a snare. Pagan pride saw nothing in poverty but its filth, its coarseness, its vulgarity, its whining. So it turned away with contemptuous indifference from the poor. Christian faith, with its piercing eye, sees hidden within the rags and the repulsive outside the sweet Babe of Bethlehem, and embraces the poor with reverent love. I want you, dearest brethren, thoroughly to realize this fact, that the Gospel has canonized poverty. Unless we cling fast to it, there is danger lest, as soon as we are compelled again to review the spirit of our times, we should lose ourselves in its Paganism, and forget the teaching of the Christmas cradle.

And now that I have warned you of your danger, turn we from the lessons of the first and second Advent, and let us test by them the principles, the practical teaching, the political and social creed of the nineteenth century respecting poverty. I want to put a plain, home question to the priesthood of this new gospel of liberalism and distilled Christianity. What have you done, what are you doing, with your poor? You have taken the care and tending of them, for something more than three

* St. Luke xviii. 24, 25.

hundred years, out of the hands of the Church, and since that time you have been making and unmaking your poor-laws. In your workhouses, in that fearful system—at least in its practical administration—of your casual wards, have you for one moment recognised the sacredness of poverty? If your own children were threatened openly with the contamination, which has become a sort of normal institution for the young who throng your workhouses, would you allow a moment to pass without insisting on a remedy? In your vagrancy laws, in the recent statute about hawkers' licenses, have you practically owned that the poor are the special representatives of Jesus Christ? Do your rules and regulations about begging breathe even a little of the Gospel of our common Redeemer? If Christ and His Blessed Mother were to come now, in this nineteenth century, into England as they came some eighteen hundred years or more into Bethlehem, would you not have had them up, ere now, before the police-court as vagrants? And yet you can afford to boast that you have restored the pure Gospel free from the supposed corruptions of Popery, and utter aloud your lamentations that in that incorrigible city of Rome beggars and crowds of poor beset the places of common resort! You seem to forget that you are dealing with one of the brightest evidences of her Divine institution. You seem to forget that you are indirectly aiming your complaints against Christ, Who was constantly surrounded by the poor. Meanwhile you do your best to stultify our Blessed Lord's words, *Semper pauperes habetis vobiscum*—"The poor

you have always with you ; ”* and punish poverty as though it were a crime ; and then, like the Pharisee, with a strange sort of self-satisfaction, thank God that you are not like other men.

As for the people in general, what else can be expected of them than that they should carry out, in their life, the principles of the political system to which they belong ? The great effort of our legislation has been directed for some long time past to the stimulation of trade and commerce, and to the general diffusion of all the material comforts of life. It is to this that public thought is being ever directed. It is only natural that the several classes of society should strive with all their energy to realize in practice, what has been proposed to them as their supreme good. And, in fact, what is life in this great town of Manchester but a perpetual struggle to make money, to scrape together mere wealth ? What elbowing, and anxiety, and wasted energy, in order to rise one degree in the social scale ! Who is there that thinks of God, or cares for God, when he is about his business, trade, or profession ? Who is there that carries religious scruples into the counting-house, or stops to consider whether a mercantile transaction is sanctioned by the law of God’s justice, if only it can pass muster at the bar of public opinion ? No ; what the great throng of men want is material comforts, a large balance at the banker’s, profitable bargains, enormous profits, successful speculations. They hunger after money. They labour assiduously to get money. They waste

* St. Matt. xxvi. 11.

an energy on this pursuit, which would have sufficed to make them saints. Yes, money is their supreme good, and all the things that money can procure. Dinner parties, jovial meetings, evening parties where interest and pleasure contend for the supremacy, richly-furnished houses, a vulgar material splendour, equipages, costly wines, elegant and fashionable dresses—these, forsooth, are the follies which occupy men, whom God had created to fill the vacant thrones of the Angels! Yes, playing with pebbles, like children, on the shore of time, they are so absorbed with their baubles that they see not the ocean which surrounds them, till they are swept off by its waves. Buried in materialism—slaves to the most degrading of worships—rapt up in the low ambition of strutting before their fellows during life in the meretricious ornaments of an ill-gotten wealth—what a multitude of men sleep on in sensuality till they die, and die only to live out an eternal death. Behold the second plague-spot of our times;—**MATERIALISM, MONEY-WORSHIP.**

I invite you to go with me once more to the stable of Bethlehem. Who are its inmates? There is the sweet and Immaculate Mother. She is a Virgin. There is the just and holy Patriarch, St. Joseph. He too is a virgin. And then the Divine Babe, the centre of the whole picture, He also is a Virgin. The Christmas stable contains a family of virgins. Furthermore; throughout His whole wondrous life Jesus, our Model, remained a Virgin. His chosen and best-beloved Apostle, the dear Evangelist St. John—disciple of the Sacred Heart—

was a virgin. Most of the other Apostles were virgins; and even St. Peter, though a married man before his conversion and call, must needs leave his wife when elected to the Apostolic College. Again; Christ tells us of His mystical members, and evidently by way of praise, that many make themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake.* In His Sermon on the Mount He exclaims, *Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt*—"Blessed are they who have a pure heart, for they shall see God."† Such is the worth, such the dignity, of the angelic virtue of chastity in the Church of Christ. In perfect concordance with the teaching of Jesus Christ, the Apostle St. Paul declares that it would be better for a man to remain like he was, a virgin.‡ Again. In the Apocalypse we are told of a hundred and forty-four thousand, who appeared in Heaven, *Habentes nomen Agni et nomen Patris Ejus scriptum in frontibus suis. Et cantabant quasi canticum novum ante sedem, et ante quatuor animalia, et seniores; et nemo poterat dicere canticum, nisi illa centum quadraginta millia, qui empti sunt de terra. Hi sunt, qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati; virgines enim sunt. Hi sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit*—"Having the name of the Lamb and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. And they sang as it were a new canticle before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the ancients. And no man could utter the canticle, save those hundred and forty-four thousand, who were purchased from the earth. These are they who are not defiled with

* St. Matt. xix. 12. † St. Matt. v. 8. ‡ 1 Cor. vii. 8.

women; for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."* On the other hand St. Paul admonishes us thus: *Nolite errare: neque fornicarii . . . adulteri, neque molles . . . regnum Dei possidebunt*—"Do not err: neither fornicators . . . nor adulterers nor the effeminate . . . shall possess the Kingdom of God."† And St. John informs us that outside the gates of the celestial city, and excluded from its eternal beatitude, are the unchaste.‡ Such is the spirit of the Gospel. It elevates virginity by counsel, and by the loftiest example, to the first place of dignity in the Church of Christ. It enforces chastity as a duty of severest precept, to whatever state of life God calls us. It menaces impurity with the eternal pains of hell.

And what has the spirit of the age to say to this same matter? Does it treat purity at all as though it were of the supreme importance that it really is? Why, it cries out against vows of chastity or of virginity as though they were relics of a barbarous age. It is ever declaiming against the celibacy of the Christian priesthood. It openly denounces such a life as being a crime against society and the State. It would force marriage on every child of Adam, if it dared. It visits with its supreme disapprobation all who prefer espousals with Christ. And how does it deal with the opposite vice of impurity? Does it lift up its stentorian voice against abuses too well known in our public schools, with the vigour that it manifests against a case of bribery at an election? Does it ever suggest some

* xiv. 1, 3, 4.

† 1 Cor. vi. 9.

‡ Apoc. xxii. 15.

closer supervision, by which this torrent of iniquity might be at least partially restrained? Does it call indignant attention to the crowd of cases which burden our divorce-courts? And yet this is, at all events, as crying an evil as a defective sewerage. Does it make one solitary effort to remedy a shamelessness in our public streets at night, which makes our name a by-word in Europe? No, it takes no pains whatever in this direction. But I tell you what it does. It destroys or weakens the natural horror, which awakens even at the thought of such sins, by euphemisms and proverbs of its own. It talks, with a smile, of young men sowing their wild oats. It describes youths, who are given up to wickedness, as fast fellows. It allows such as they are a free entrance into the company of English maidens; just as if their very presence were not in itself a contamination. It treats these mortal sins of the flesh as though they were at the worst a slight peccadillo, a trifling fault. It covertly argues that it is, after all, necessary for a young man to have a practical knowledge of life—*i.e.*, as it means it, of mortal sin; as though it were a fundamental element in man's moral education, that he should bind himself, for the brightest years of his life, to the service of the devil. And what is the reason that any special marks of the opposite virtue are received by the press with an outburst of rage or contempt? Why is it that because Priests walked the streets of London with modest and downcast eyes, lest death should enter in by those windows of the soul, one of the leading journals of this kingdom should have raised an

insolent laugh of derision at such carefulness of modest virtue? Why is it that our popular literature is so often filled with material for exciting youthful passions, that it is often perilous to read it? Why are accounts of vices of this kind copied from paper to paper, till they are known and read in every corner of the kingdom, thus perpetuating by suggestion the evil sins which are thoughtlessly recorded? Why are our casual wards such dens of infamy? Why is infanticide so common? Why is it increasing? Why are ill-begotten children so numerous in all our counties and towns? Here is the third plague-spot;—SENSUALITY AND IMPURITY. Again am I compelled to say it: “Thecel; O age, thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting.”

Go we back once more to the Christmas cradle. Why is the Holy Family in Bethlehem at all? Its place of residence is Nazareth. What brings St. Joseph and our Lady here? I can find but one answer. It is the unanimous answer of Jesus, Joseph, and Mary. *Obedience* is the cause, obedience to the edict of a Pagan Emperor. During the first infancy of the Incarnate God, what induced Him to allow Himself to be carried by Mary and Joseph just where they pleased? My reason is still,—obedience. For the first thirty years of His life, His merits, His practical teaching, are summed up in one word. What is that word? *Et erat subditus illis*—“And He was subject to them.”* It is still obedience. He announces to us the one object and purpose of His visit to this earth of ours. What was that purpose? It does not

* St. Luke ii. 51.

take long to tell. *Quia descendi de cælo, non ut faciam voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem Ejus, Qui misit Me*—"For I came down from Heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him Who has sent Me."* The keynote of His most sacred Passion, what was it? *Non sicut Ego volo, sed sicut Tu*—"Not as I will, but as Thou willest."† St. Paul sums up the whole virtue of His life in a line. How does he do it? *Factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis*—"He was made obedient even unto death, and that death was the death of the Cross."‡ I find, then, three blossoms of one virtue blooming beside the Christmas Child. And these are religious obedience, political obedience, domestic obedience;—obedience to God, obedience to Kings and earthly government, obedience to parents. And this triple obedience is so repeatedly inculcated in both Testaments, that it would be a waste of time to quote particular texts. The second Advent enforces the same lesson quite as distinctly. The Holy Scriptures teach us plainly enough that disobedience, in any one of these three forms, will exclude us from the blessedness of the just. I will satisfy myself with one text, whose awful significance in these days it would be impossible to exaggerate. *Non est potestas, nisi a Deo; quæ autem sunt, a Deo ordinatæ sunt. Itaque qui resistit potestati, Dei ordinationi resistit. Qui autem resistunt, ipsi sibi damnationem acquirunt*—"There is no power but from God; and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to

* St. John vi. 38. † St. Matt. xxvi. 39. ‡ Phil. ii. 8.

themselves damnation.”* But, my devout brethren, why should I linger over a truth so self-evident? Who is there that knows not, owns not, the fact that obedience is the very foundation of Christian morality, just as disobedience was the first lesson of the devil? Yet one word more. Obedience necessarily supposes a spirit of reverence; for obedience and reverence are twin sisters.

Once more then let us revert to public opinion, and weigh it in this balance of the Sanctuary. It would occupy me too long at the end of a sermon, were I to pursue in detail the general spirit of its disobedience to God. Yet, my dear hearers, I must say the plain truth. Such disobedience is deeply engrained in the very spirit of the age. Allow me to illustrate what I mean by one example. There is a certain time in every man's life when he is summoned to debate the solemn question of his future work in life. He must make his choice. All the occupations of the world are open to him. The selection is in his own hands. Now the assertion does not require any proof that God his Creator knows what is best for him, and wills that his choice should take a direction in accordance with the Divine intentions. Is there one man out of fifty thousand who, in our time, thinks of consulting God about the matter at all? Among the numerous motives which weigh with him—the will of parents, his natural bent, the aid of friends or relatives, the chances of success, the appearance of an opening, the need of capital, physical capacity for endurance, and the rest—does

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

it ever occur to a man to ask, before making up his mind—"Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do?" Yet surely, if at so momentous an epoch of our lives we thwart God's intentions and wishes in our regard, our decision will be the inevitable parent of future misery, mental anxiety, and disappointment, if not of eternal ruin. Moreover, to exclude God thus from our counsels on so important a matter is irrational and ungrateful.

But again. Why is it that our ears are stunned with that ceaseless outcry, palling upon us by its very sameness, about the glorious independence of an Englishman? In what is he independent? Has he no dependence on his parents? Is he not dependent on the laws? Can he live for a day independently of his neighbours? Is he not a slave in nine cases out of ten to public opinion. God made man to be dependent on man in every stage of existence, in every rank of life; as if, by the very exigencies of our common nature, to teach us the necessity of obedience. Our age reverses the divine arrangement; and claims an impossible independence, because it will not own the duty of obedience. Look, again, at the popular writings of the day. How are not the changes rung day after day with monotonous regularity on our privileges, our rights, our claims, our liberties. Not a word do we hear about our responsibilities, our duties, our needs, our subjection. Liberty of thought, liberty of speech, liberty of action, liberty of worship, of government,—these are the shibboleths of our day. But, most fatal symptom of all, I find on all sides, wherever I turn eye or ear, that detestable and immoral spirit of criticism which

festers in our midst. Yes, I repeat it—detestable. For it has no reverence. It knows no worship. It never by any chance looks upward, but, seated on a celestial throne of its own manufacture, it summons everything human and divine before its judgment-seat—plans of war, books of science, protocols of diplomatists, measures of ministers, Bulls of Popes, controversies of faith, questions of ritual, problems of philosophy, works of art, traditions of the past—and, with a shallow impertinence, issues its dogmatic edicts and canonizes its own infallibility. Devout brethren, I do not know in the whole course of history a more melancholy instance of human self-conceit than this. Yet the people drink all this in, and catch the like spirit, and carp, and sneer, and judge without any qualm of conscience on matters which they cannot know, and in solemn fields of thought, on the boundaries of which the very Angels tremble. Here is the fourth plague-spot of our age;—ITS INDEPENDENCE AND IMPATIENCE OF RESTRAINT. Again must I apply to it the words of the Prophet Daniel—“Thecel ; thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting.”

To conclude. There are four great virtues which are specially characteristic of the Christian revelation. These are faith, poverty, chastity, and obedience. And diametrically opposed to these are the four fashionable vices of our age and nation. They are indifferentism, materialism and money-worship, sensuality, and independence. The most striking illustration perhaps of the truth of the charge which I have brought against the prevailing temper of our times,

I have reserved to the last. One place there is where the four virtues of the Christian cradle are professed in their entirety; one place where the example of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Bible, even in its counsels of perfection are, in intention at least and according to the measure of grace, followed to the letter. It is the religious house, the monastery and convent. Why is it that public opinion directs its fury and its flippant satire against these sanctuaries of God in particular? Why is it that here physical violence may do what it pleases, unnoticed, uncondemned? Why are Monks and Nuns ever depicted as lazy, disaffected, unsocial nuisances, worthless mendicants, useless drags on society? Why does our free press in England applaud to the echo the forced suppression of religious houses in Italy by acts of injustice, which, if perpetrated here, would be at once the signal for a civil war or popular insurrection? Why is it that, while the inviolability of private property, and the right of the individual to employ his wealth in any way he pleases, are sacred principles of the English Constitution with which no one would be permitted for a moment to tamper, we quietly ignore them when their protection is claimed by a community of men or women, who choose to consecrate their fortunes and life to the service of Christ? Why do we, as a people, look on unconcerned and without one word of protest, while Religious, stripped of their means, are forced within forty-eight hours to leave their country and home for a life of exile in another land; and raise on the pinnacle of fame the chief actor in these

savage outrages? I fear me well that the reason is but too plain. Poverty, chastity, and obedience, are the three nails of Mount Calvary. And the world hates the very sight of such unwelcome relics. I fear too surely that if Christ had been born in England in this nineteenth century, public opinion would have reviled Him and His Apostles with as much insult and acrimony as it now reviles us. I fear me that the poverty of Christ would have been a scandal and offence; that the virgin purity of Christ would have been despised and laughed at; that the obedience of Christ would have been denounced as slavish superstition, and as being inimical to the inborn rights, the independence, of an Englishman.

O poor nineteenth century, with your railroads, steamboats, electric telegraphs, penny papers, Pinnock's catechisms, mechanics' institutes, so-called education, with your worship of exports and imports, of free trade, and annual budgets! Poor nineteenth century, with your stage-lights of modern civilization, and material progress, and advancement of physical science, and progress of mechanical invention! Poor nineteenth century, with your pretension and your shallow philosophy and your dreamy scepticism! You fancy that you are advancing into new and as yet undiscovered light. You reject the past. You practically deny Christ. You worship yourself. Full of restless energy and boastful self-confidence, you would fain create for yourself a world of truth, and develop into God. But the swift course of time will take its own vengeance. You will have let off all your fireworks, and made believe to create a new

heaven and a new earth. But long after you are buried in the sepulchre of departed ages, the tranquil stars of heaven will shine on as before. You may bind matter to your triumphant chariot-wheels, you may blot out time-honoured dynasties, beat crowns into guineas, change the map of Europe, ransack the bowels of the earth that you may force the inanimate creature to give the lie to its Creator ; you may foster a hornets' nest of organized conspirators, and make of revolution an European institution. One thing you cannot do. You cannot deprive immortal Truth of life. You cannot reach with your renovated Tower of Babel up to God's throne. You cannot destroy the sacramental power of Faith, Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. There is however one thing that you can do ; and you seem bent on doing it. May God avert the omen ! You may commit a fatal suicide.

SERMON III.

THE CHRISTMAS STABLE THE STRENGTH OF GOD AGAINST MODERN PRINCIPLES.

1 COR. i. 25.

Quod infirmum est Dei, fortius est hominibus.

The weakness of God is stronger than men.

THE Prophet Isaías, while seeing in prophetic vision the Nativity of the future Messias, sets before us in his revelation one of the greatest of those many wonders which surround this ineffable mystery. *Parvulus enim*, he says, *natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis; et factus est principatus super humerum Ejus*—"For a Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us, and the government is upon His shoulder."* On the one hand there is a Child, on the other a universal sovereignty. And it is the Child upon Whose shoulder the government of the world is placed. Weakness and strength meet together. But there is this difference. The weakness is the weakness of the world, and the strength is the strength of God. The weakness is visible, the strength invisible. It is weakness in things material and temporal, strength in things

* ix. 6.

spiritual and eternal. This indeed is the Sacrament of the God-Man. The whole power of God was united to human weakness. The feebleness of childhood contained, yet veiled, the omnipotent Son of God, "Who is the brightness of His Father's glory."*

And as is the great mystery of the Incarnation in itself, so is it likewise in the manner of its accomplishment. The same law of visible weakness united to omnipotent strength governs, if I may so say, the whole life of Jesus from the Christmas cradle to the Cross of Calvary. But nowhere is it so clearly and prominently manifested as it is in Bethlehem. Every circumstance of human weakness is, as it were, accumulated here. Human suffering, it is true, reached its climax on the hill of sorrows; but human weakness finds its special home in the Christian manger.

This same law, dearly beloved brethren, is developed in the history of the Catholic Church. And it is not strange that it should be so. For the Church is the mystical Body of Jesus; and Jesus therefore is her Head. She is the continuation of Christ upon earth. She is ever living over again the life of her heavenly Spouse. I know nothing more beautiful at once and more instructive than the parallel, which he who studies ecclesiastical history can hardly fail to discover, between the life of Christ and that of His Church.

On the other hand, the life of the world and of human kingdoms follows a law which is exactly contradictory. It is visibly strong, invisibly weak.

* Heb. i. 3.

All its strength abides in the outside surface. Its development depends upon material and sensible greatness, and the appliances of temporal power. Well: this, which is the world's inherent defect, has been embodied in a set of principles,—good enough in their way, and when applied to their proper subject-matter,—yet which become a deceitful lie when applied to Christianity and the Christian Church. Public opinion in England has so misapplied them, and so misapplies them still. It tests the Catholic Church by these principles of earthly government, and then condemns her by reason of the absence of that which would really, if present within her, go far to prove her an imposture.

I have thus given you a short preliminary sketch of the general argument, which I propose to develop this night. It is a subject which the Festival of Christmas naturally suggests; and it will not, as I trust, separate us from that quiet, grateful, and uncontroversial temper which it is the property of this joyous season to engender in us, and which is so beautifully embodied in the words of the angelic anthem, *Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis*—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will."*

Let us gather, dearly beloved brethren in Jesus Christ, around the Christmas crib. *There* is the Child, of Whom Isaias has foretold that the government should be upon His shoulders, the government of a universal monarchy. *There* is the Child, Whose name is Emmanuel, God with us. *There* is He, the

* St. Luke ii. 14.

Seed of the Woman, Who was destined to crush the head of the serpent. *There* is He, of Whom sang the sweet Psalmist of Israel: *Postula a Me, et dabo Tibi gentes hæreditatem Tuam, et possessionem Tuam terminos terræ*—"Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession."* *There* is He, of Whose Kingdom thus prophesied the Prophet Daniel: *In diebus regnorum illorum suscitabit Deus cæli regnum, quod in æternum non dissipabitur, et regnum Ejus alteri populo non tradetur: comminuet autem, et consumet universa regna hæc: et ipsum stabit in æternum*—"In the days of those kingdoms the God of Heaven will set up a Kingdom that shall never be destroyed, and His Kingdom shall not be delivered up to another people: and it shall break in pieces, and shall consume all these kingdoms: and itself shall stand for ever."† Here is He, Whom the Beloved Disciple saw in Apocalyptic vision, and thus describes: *Et habet in vestimento et in femore suo scriptum, Rex regum et Dominus dominantium*—"He hath on His vestment and on His thigh written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords."‡ Behold, my brethren, how great a One is He, Whom I invite you to come and see. He is Sovereign of the last earthly Empire. The whole history of the world revolves round His throne. Kings of the earth swell His retinue. He shall stretch out the arm of His strength from sea to sea, and the people or nation that will not serve Him shall utterly perish. He is King over all the

* Psalm ii. 8.

† Dan. ii. 44.

‡ Apoc. xix. 16.

Kings of the earth ; Lord over all the Lords of the earth. His armies shall go forth against the Gentiles, and shall subdue all peoples, and tongues, and nations, and tribes, beneath His sceptre. His Kingdom shall never be destroyed, but shall abide for ever.

This is the great One Whom we now approach. Draw near His birthplace. What do you behold ? A Baby, lying on straw in the manger of a stable ; a Baby much like other babies to outward appearances, weak, helpless, uttering the feeble cry of infancy. Yet that Child, as the evangelical Prophet tells you, has *now*, in His cradle, the government of the world upon His shoulders. Examine, after the manner of men, into His parentage. It is true that His Mother is descended from the royal lineage of David. But her family has fallen in the world. She is now married to a poor labouring man—a carpenter—residing in the most contemptible town that can be found in the whole land of Palestine. There the two have lived, in complete obscurity, not visited by the rich and respectable, belonging to the lower orders. They have only come up to Bethlehem to-day, in order to be registered in the town of their tribe, according to the orders of the Government. They are so poor, that their rich relations in Bethlehem will have nothing to say to them. The inn for the reception of travellers is full. They cannot find a place there. So, accordingly, to the stable they go ; and there is the Child born. For want of a more convenient place, His Mother has made up the manger into a sort of cradle for

Him. The place itself is dark, cold, exposed to the winds of heaven, stripped of every possible convenience. The swaddling-clothes of the Babe are poor and coarse. So is the clothing of His Mother and reputed father. There is no retinue of servants, no comforts. All is humble, uninviting, insignificant.

Realize, devout brethren, with deep attention this picture of poverty and utter obscurity. Then let us invite one of Herod's astute diplomatists to come and visit the spot. He finds it difficult to get in at all into the low and narrow cave. He is a little ill-tempered at having been summoned to witness so distressing a scene of poverty. His delicate sense of smell is offended at the bad air of the stable; for animals were there, even when the Child was born. He looks about him with an ill-concealed contempt; thinks with satisfaction, heightened by the contrast, of his own richly furnished house and ample revenues; and feels a sort of lofty compassion for these less favoured children of Adam. But why has he ever been allured from his comfortable home to visit such wretched destitution as this? Whisper into his ear, by way of answer, that that Child lying there in the manger is King of the whole world; that His universal Kingdom shall endure for ever; that He is destined to crush in pieces the Roman Empire; that Kings must lick the dust before His feet. How could I hope to picture to you the various emotions which rise up within him on hearing these things? At first he is violently indignant. He fancies that he has been made the dupe of a sorry trick. But this idea will not do. There is too evident a tone

of sincerity in the speaker. Then he is seized with a sudden suspicion that he is in the hands of madmen; and there is a restless fear in his eye. But no! the calm self-possession which shows itself in the bearing of those who are gathered round, reassures him. "They are honest fanatics," he says to himself at last. So with a smile of pity he takes himself off, and hurries away to the palace of Herod, where he has been invited to dine; and keeps the table in a continued roar of laughter, while he describes with his own comical humour,—for he has a keen sense of the ridiculous,—what he is pleased to call "the farce of the stable."

Yet in that very stable the Divine Child held His first Court; and admitted Kings to audience. Over that very stable bands of Angels sung celestial carols to their King and Queen. That manger contains within it a God Incarnate, Who is the Light, Life, Resurrection, of all the generations of time. Yes of a truth, *Quod infirmum est Dei, fortius est hominibus*—"The weakness of God is stronger than men."

Yet spite of all His poverty, weakness, lowliness, obscurity, He was of sufficient importance, even in His cradle, to excite the jealousy of Kings. His Blessed Mother, with St. Joseph, had to flee with Him into Egypt, to preserve Him from the hands of those who lay in wait for Him. The hardships, privations, sufferings, which they endured in this journey and during their few years' sojourn in that idolatrous land, we shall never know till the Day of Judgment. But did the tenor of His life after

His return show in any respect a change for the better, as the world would say? Did He, as He grew up into years, begin to surround Himself with the pomp and pride of power, and all the usual worldly accompaniments of regal office? Did He give to the free-thinkers of that generation any external sign that He had succeeded to the throne of His father David, and that He was about to found a universal Empire? From the time of His return, where was He? what was He doing? Living till the age of thirty in that poor little country-town of the despised Galilee, His outer life may be summed up in a word. He worked in a shop as a poor carpenter's Apprentice.

So far we see but little preparation for so vast a project as that of the subjugation of the Roman Empire, and of the establishment of a new and eternal Polity on its ruins. But perhaps He bides His time. Three years and a half of His life have yet to run out, and now at length He is about to set to work to accomplish His great mission. Surely now, at all events, He will assume the externals of a King. He will begin to enlist an army, hold political meetings, and inflame the Jewish populace with a new and fiercer hatred of Roman domination. He will collect money, form a rich exchequer, and live henceforth in state. Thus would men of the world reckon. This would be their common-sense view of the matter. Nevertheless, it was not to be so. The clothing of Jesus was poor, simple, and modest, as before. He had so little of this world's conveniences, that He could say of Himself, *Vulpes forcas habent, et volucres*

cæli nidos: Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput reclinet—"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."* He did indeed gather together twelve followers, whom He had destined to be the Princes of His Kingdom. But who were they? Most of them poor fishermen, picked up while they were mending their nets on the shore of the sea of Galilee. One was a public tax-gatherer, whose office was held in especial abhorrence and contempt by the Jews. These were the sole instruments He chose for the completion of His world-wide revolution. Once only did He assume anything like regal dignity. It was when He arranged a public procession into Jerusalem. And what sort of a display was this? Seated on an ass—His saddle, the rough coats of the fishermen—His body-guard, the poor labouring men whom He had chosen from the lowest orders of the people—His military band, groups of innocent children singing hosannas with their infant voices—He rides into His royal city. So contemptible did the procession appear in the eyes of the more respectable by-standers, that they approached our Lord and asked Him to silence the disturbance by His authority. Probably they feared that it would interfere with the traffic.

At last the end of His life is approaching. And where is His Empire? He is standing before the judgment-seat of the chief magistrate of the city as a public malefactor. The impression which He produced on the mind of great statesmen and astute politicians and of their rude followers we know full well. Herod

* St. Matt. viii. 20.

—that crafty fox, as our Lord calls him*—treated Him as a senseless fanatic, set Him at nought with his men of war, and in sheer derision dressed Him up in the well-known garment of an idiot. The Roman soldiers, taking the cue from their betters, must have their fun and pleasantry too. They drag Him from the pillar of scourging, where He lay weltering in His Blood, and hurry Him off to their guard-room. There they put on Him an old cast-off military cloak, which had once belonged to one of their comrades, platted a crown of thorns and set it firmly on His head, put a reed in His bloodless hands to serve for a sceptre, and then went through the mock ceremonial of a Court, bowing the knee, and saying, amid rude explosions of laughter from their boon companions who were assisting at the joke, *Ave, rex Judæorum*—“Hail, King of the Jews.”† The time-serving Pilate sets eyes on Him in this pitiable state, and, moved by a certain feeling of compassion, shows Him from a balcony to the infuriated populace below, and exclaims, *Eccce homo*—“Behold the Man;” and again, shortly after, *Eccce rex vester*—“Behold your King;”‡ as though he should say—“How irrational are all your fears and complaints about this Man! What can such a One as He do against Cæsar or the Roman Government? Look at Him half fainting from His wounds and loss of blood. Behold the poor Man, Whom you accuse of wishing to make Himself King of the Jews. Are you still afraid that this half-dead Victim may do you any mischief?” Pilate, you see, formed his judgment about Jesus

* St. Luke xiii. 2. † St. Matt. xxvii. 29. ‡ St. John xix. 5, 14.

then, as our astute politicians form their judgment now about the Church. But Pilate was wrong.

Once more. Christ's coronation-day has arrived. The proclamation has been already set up on high in various languages, that all may know it. Come and witness the details of His investiture. His throne is a criminal's cross. His royal robe is the nakedness of poverty ; His crown, a crown of thorns ; the oil of consecration, His own Blood ; His sceptre, the nails which pierced His hands. The only acclamations that greet His ears are the scoffs of Scribe and Pharisee, mingled with the groans and execrations of the people. Who in that vast throng would have believed you, if you had foretold to them that pieces of that same Cross would be, in after times, preserved in gold and precious woods throughout the cities of the world, as the most precious and venerable of treasures ; that one of those Nails would go to adorn and sanctify the crown of one of Europe's greatest kingdoms ; and that this coronation-day, with its countless sorrows, would be observed as a great solemnity by countless millions, and its memory preserved in after-days throughout the civilized world by annual commemoration till the end of time ? Yet so it has come to pass.

With such utter visible weakness ever surrounding Him, the judgment of the wise ones of the world was natural enough, looking at the matter from their point of view. They erred by misapplying the principles of human action and causality to the work of God. They trusted to what they would call, doubtless, their common-sense. So, when they witnessed all this

external weakness, when they were assured of the death of Jesus, and came to know that He had left behind Him after His death only about a hundred and twenty disciples,* most of them belonging to the lower orders, with what contempt and ridicule would they not have greeted the very mention of His name ! From what an immeasurable height of self-complacency would they look down on this vulgar sect of the Nazarene ! And if there had been newspapers in those days, we should doubtless have had a smart and lofty article, exposing with dignified severity the mischievous folly of such wild fanaticism, and pointing out, even to demonstration, that the efforts of these hundred and fifty men could never hope to succeed against the world-wide majesty of Rome, while they were, in the meantime, doing irreparable mischief to the stability of public order and the security of the funds.

And yet, my devout brethren, the Object of this judgment of the world—of all its contempt, hatred, sarcasm, and invective—is the God-Man, the Omnipotent Creator Himself. He has willed to clothe Himself in the lowest form of human weakness, but this “Weakness of God is stronger than man.” The world put little faith in His words when He said: *Et Ego, si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad Me ipsum*—“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth on My Cross, will draw all men to Me.”† Yet, nevertheless, these words have been verified by the event. The world could never understand the invincible power of Christ’s weakness. That inner life of divine

* Acts i. 15.

† St. John xii. 32.

energy was hidden from it. Not but that Christ our Lord revealed His heavenly strength to it from time to time. But then it would not believe in His miracles, even when it saw them. "It was a chance," the spectator would say on such occasions, "or magic." Probably, if mesmerism had been known, there would have been at that time, as there are now, men who would have ascribed His miracles to it. Anything, however absurd, would be better than to acknowledge that God is ever actively at work in the midst of nature, and that He sometimes suspends His own laws out of compassion for His thoughtless creatures. Hence, when the Father bare witness to His beloved Son in a voice from Heaven, these sceptics contented themselves with observing that it thundered.* When Jesus broke through the trammels of the grave on the morning of His Resurrection, they simply laughed, and said it was nothing but a trick of the Apostles, who wanted to work on the imagination of the weak-minded and superstitious, and so gain over a few more proselytes. Precisely, be it observed, what public opinion in our day says of the miracles of the Catholic Church. And so, as the world did not deserve it, it was not admitted to the vision of Christ's Theophanies. It was shut out from the glories of the Transfiguration. It caught no glimpse of that divine brightness of the Resurrection. It was not allowed to gaze after Him, as He rose from earth to take His high place beside His Father's throne. Much less could it understand the more wondrous miracles of Jesus in the souls of men. It could

* St. John xii. 29.

know nothing of that mightiness of grace which converted a Magdalene steeped in sin into an illustrious Saint, the pattern of penitents ; and changed at once a life-long criminal in his dying hour into a citizen of Heaven. It would not—could not—perceive the hidden virtue of that Cross, whose touch, unwillingly endured, could change an African infidel into a Catholic Bishop ; nor comprehend the power of that dying cry, which forced a Pagan centurion to make his act of faith ; nor the efficiency of that stream of blood and water flowing from the pierced heart of the dead Christ, which could transform a fierce and cruel Pagan soldier into a canonized Saint. In a word, the world then, as now, would not believe that there were power, riches, empire, other than its own. So Christ Jesus came, and took to Himself weakness, poverty, obscurity, contempt, and persecution. And with these He triumphed, conquered the world, and founded an eternal monarchy.

And this eternal monarchy, dearly beloved brethren in Jesus Christ, is the Catholic Church, in whose history the same identical law is developed. How indeed could it be otherwise ? For external weakness is the property of the Blessed Redeemer. And the spouse has a special participation in the possessions of her Husband. Visible weakness, therefore, and the contempt of the world, must be her portion, as they were the portion of her Lord. And, as a fact, so has it come to pass. Immediately after Christ's ascension into Heaven His Empire was destined to be established in all lands. It was commissioned and empowered to raze Pagan temples,

to destroy idols, and to reduce all the families of the earth to the obedience of one faith. And how was it done? What armies were enrolled, what navies formed? Were chests of treasure amassed, the foundation of a future exchequer? Were mighty warriors or generals, astute statesmen, or men of substance, gradually gathered to its side? No. God chose to use no such means as these, for they are resources and weapons of the world. All, on the contrary, was apparent weakness. Twelve illiterate men, for the most part of low birth, of no education, without riches or honours,—who had never handled any other weapons than their boat-hooks or oars,—unprovided with resources for their journey,—utterly unacquainted with foreign languages, foreign habits, customs, and modes of thought,—unknown to the civil powers,—without any commendatory letters from Ministers of State or from the Government,—these were the instruments elected by God to conquer the world. And they did it. And so effectually did they do it that about a hundred years afterwards a living witness tells us that the Christians were already in every land and city and town.*

But the Empire of Christ had not as yet sup-

* Tertullian, in his *Apology*, ch. xxxvii. These are his words—“We are of yesterday, and we have filled all your places, cities, islands, dwellings, towns, councils, the very camp, tribes, classes, the palace, the senate, the forum; the only things we have left to you are the temples.” An anonymous writer of the Apostolic age, whom some suppose to be Apollos mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts xviii. 24), could say even at that earliest time—“What the soul is in the body, that Christians are in the world. The soul is spread through all the members of the body, and so are Christians throughout the States of the world” (*Epist. ad Diognetum*, cap. vi.).

planted or destroyed the old Pagan Empire of Rome. Nevertheless the prophecy was hastening on to its accomplishment. SS. Peter and Paul had already laid the foundations of the new Kingdom in the great metropolis of the world. That Kingdom soon gathered to itself a multitude of every age, sex, and condition of life. And, after a little, it was seen to find its way within the imperial palace on the Palatine.* It began to be whispered about in Court circles that now such a one, and now such another, had joined the new Christian sect; till at length old Pagan Rome took the alarm, and challenged the Catholic Church to a mortal duel. How unequal seems the contest! The last earthly Empire arms to the teeth. It brings to bear against its rival the whole force of the executive, with public opinion to back it. The Church of Christ, unarmed, poor, despised, calumniated, utterly destitute of worldly resources, comes forth from her cradle to meet the giant. How could human wisdom and the world's common-sense even once doubt of the issue? Here was strength arrayed against weakness; riches against poverty; law against outlawry; possession, prescription, world-wide political power, against novelty; an upstart, unorganized sect hiding from the face of day, against the last earthly Empire in the height of its glory. Well, the wrestling began. Persecution, torture, wholesale massacre, were the order of the day. The Coliseum drank deep of Christian blood. One great cry rises from the brutal mob of Rome, *Christiani ad leones!*—"The Christians to the lions!" That shout of the metropolis found

* Philip. iv. 22.

an echo in the provinces. Rome put forth all her strength to give the Church of Christ a final fall. Long lasted the struggle. At intervals there was a short cessation, during which the two combatants paused to take breath. It continued for more than two centuries; and then at length it ended. And how? The old Pagan giant came out of the arena beaten, prostrate, more than half dead; while the young Christian Church, unhurt, and with full celestial life and vigour, mounts the capitol and plants the Cross on its summit. The last earthly Empire was on the point of dissolution; and Christ was enthroned as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Yet though Rome was beaten, there were other enemies who would fain try their strength with the young athlete. The dead body of that great Polity, which had so long held the world in awe, was beginning to infect the air. And the vultures of the North scented their prey from afar. On the instant came the hordes swooping down on Italy; and laid waste the lands over which they passed with fire and sword. A famous warrior, whose very name breathed terror, was at their head. And they approached the gates of Rome. Atilla, with his merciless Huns, challenges the Church to a second trial of her strength. Once more, what weakness on the one side, what strength on the other! It was a duel between the fierce warlike power of savage hordes steeped in blood, and an unarmed peaceful Priesthood. Forth from Rome goes Leo, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, with his surpliced train. The tiara is pitted against the crown; the

power of the keys against sword and shield and spear. The Pope meets Attila face to face. He speaks ; and the haughty conqueror, who never yet had turned his back to the foe, retires at once before this novel warfare. The Pope has saved Rome by a bloodless victory. When asked why he had thus fallen back, just as Rome was in his easy grasp, Attila gave answer, that he saw, standing above the head of the venerable Pontiff, a figure robed in sacerdotal vestments, who with a drawn sword in his hand threatened him with instant death unless he obeyed the voice of Leo. That figure was Peter, Prince of the Apostles. True is it, then, once more that "the weakness of God is stronger than man."

And such, my dearly beloved brethren in Jesus Christ, has been the one great law ever developed in the history of the Church, and most especially in that of the Vicars of Christ, the venerable Successors of St. Peter. And indeed it is only natural to expect that it would have been so. For the Church is Christ as it were re-living in our midst. And the life of the Church is epitomized in the lives of the Popes. They bear on their shoulders the care of all the Churches ; for they are the chief Shepherds of the whole Christian flock. As Christ is the invisible, so are they the visible, Head of the whole Catholic communion. It does not therefore surprise us that they should be made most like to Christ, and should accordingly exemplify in the most striking manner that wondrous life of strength in weakness. It is true, then, that they of all Catholics can most truly use as their own the words of St. Paul: *Tanquam morientes, et ecce*

vivimus—"As dying, and behold we live;"* and that other, *Quæ stulta sunt mundi elegit Deus, ut confundant sapientes; et infirma mundi elegit Deus, ut confundant fortia; et ignobilia mundi et contemptibilia elegit Deus, et ea quæ non sunt, ut ea quæ sunt destrucet, ut non gloriatur omnis caro in conspectu Ejus*—"The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong; and the base things of the world and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He might bring to nought things that are, that no flesh might glory in His sight."† God wills to take all the honour and glory of His victories to Himself. So he chooses weakness as the instrument of His triumphs. The Popes suffer; and the Catholic faith prevails.

The greater number of the Popes of the first three centuries were either Martyrs or Confessors. And though after eighteen hundred years the Successor of St. Peter remains still on his Apostolic throne, yet from the beginning until now he has been so frequently driven forth from his metropolis, that such a fortune may be said to have become one of the characteristics of the Papacy. Cornelius was relegated to Cività Vecchia, Liberius to Thrace. John I. was imprisoned in Ravenna. Martin was first sent to prison by the Emperor, and then banished to the Chersonese. And since the time that the Pope has become a temporal Sovereign, Leo III. had to leave Rome; John VIII. was obliged to seek an asylum in

* 2 Cor. vi. 9.

† 1 Cor. i. 27—29.

France; John XII. was expelled by the first Otho; Benedict V. died in exile at Hamburg; Benedict VIII. was driven from Rome and went to Germany. The Roman factions expelled from their city John XIII. Benedict IX. was twice driven out. So likewise was Gregory VI. Gregory VII. died in exile. Paschal II. was a prisoner in Sabinum; Gelasius II., an exile at Gaeta. Innocent II. had to flee from Rome as soon as he was elected. Alexander III. had to leave Rome four times. Gregory IX., Innocent IV., Urban IV., Boniface IX., Innocent VIII., were all obliged through persecution to leave Rome. John XXIII. was forced to quit by a hostile army; Eugenius IV. by the people; Clement IV. by a foreign Power.*

And now, my brethren, within less than a century, three Popes have been driven from the City of the Seven Hills. You all, doubtless, know the sad history of that diabolical revolution which afflicted France towards the close of the last century, and of whose deadly fruit we have not yet seen the last. Pius VI. was then on the Pontifical throne. One of the most illustrious statesmen of this country, who was then at the head of affairs, Mr. Pitt, had endeavoured to persuade the Pope to proclaim a general crusade of Europe against the anarchical democracy in France, and had promised him the active cooperation of the great Powers, if he would consent to initiate the coalition. How sublime was his answer! While expressing deep gratitude to Mr. Pitt for the contents

* This list has been taken from the *Unità Cattolica*, a translation of which was given in the *Weekly Register*, December 1, 1866. I have omitted not a few of the examples there collected.

of his communication, he at the same time remarked that the Sovereign Pontiff's work was to save souls, not to excite wars, however just. He therefore declined the proposal, and declared his determination calmly to look on, and to await the time when, as he felt sure it would, the revolution should claim him as its victim. Nor was that time long in coming. When the King and Queen of France were murdered on the scaffold, Pius VI. boldly confronted the savage murderers with a protest publicly uttered before the face of Europe. The Directory answered by leading on its troops to Rome. They entered the gates without a struggle; for the Father of his people would not permit a useless effusion of blood. He is dragged out of Rome by the victorious troops, scarcely arrives at the citadel of Valence, and there stricken with paralysis,—worn out by sufferings, hardship, the rigours of his forced and hurried journey, and by the infirmities of old age,—yields up his soul to God. The secret societies and the infidels of France are mad with excess of joy. "The Papacy," say they, "is dead and buried. Pope there shall be no more. Henceforth the religion of the world shall lie prostrate before the goddess of reason." Less than three months have elapsed. The Directory collapses amid the acclamations of Europe; its fall accelerated by the fall of Buonaparte. A year has not passed over since the death of Pius VI.; and behold! the Sacred College, assembled in Venice, unanimously elects Pius VII. to fill the vacant Chair of Peter. Yet once more, "The weakness of God is stronger than men."

But Pius VII., too, was reserved for a fate similar to that of his predecessor. Napoleon had not long made himself Emperor, ere he seized on the patrimony of St. Peter. Again is the Church challenged to do battle. What physical force can be found now in the utter visible prostration of the Papacy, wherewith to resist the armies of the great conqueror of Europe? There was none. But the Pope was master of another and more terrible power; and he was compelled to use it. He fulminated the sentence of excommunication against the Emperor; and was in consequence dragged in the secrecy of night from the Vatican, and hurried off, a captive, into France. Here again we have the physical force of the world pitted against the weakness of God. And it seems for the moment to fare ill with the latter. The helpless High Priest is in the hands of his enemy; his kingdom is occupied by French troops; his temporal power destroyed by an edict of the Empire. But there still remains the sentence of excommunication, which has been ratified in Heaven. The excommunicate, in his pride of power, makes mock of the sentence; and sarcastically asks if the Papal excommunication shall make sword and musket to fall from the hands of his soldiers. God answered the insolent challenge. The handwriting was already on the wall. And that, which Napoleon suggested in mockery, literally came to pass. The finest army, perhaps, that Europe had ever seen, set out from France. No human power consumed that noble host. God chose from His own armoury, and sent out against it ice, and snow, and the biting north wind. And then, of a

truth, did the sword and musket fall from the frozen hand of the soldier. And the weak, frozen skeleton of that once magnificent army came back, leaving the greater number of its men on the corpse-strewn plains of Russia, to attest to an unbelieving age the invincible power of the keys. The fifth year of the Pope's captivity has not yet transpired; and Pius VII. returns with demonstrations of public joy, such as Rome had never seen before, to his Apostolic throne; while the voices of above three hundred thousand of the Faithful greet his public entry with their anthem of victory, "Hosanna. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." In January from Fontainebleau he sets forth for Rome, freed from his chains. Less than three months after, in that same palace where he had found a temporary prison, Napoleon is compelled to sign his abdication; appears once more at the head of an army before astonished Europe, only to receive a final defeat; and then is sent by his enemies, a life-long captive, off to the rocky isle of St. Helena. Verily, *Quod infirmum est Dei fortius est hominibus*—"The weakness of God is stronger than men."

Once more has the same law been illustrated in the history of the present Pius IX. Eighteen years ago, the wretched offspring of the first French revolution drove him from Rome. But it was not for long. The Catholic arms of France rescued the City of the Church from the misrule and anarchy of a tyrannical and impious triumvirate; and the Pontiff returned from Gaeta to the great joy and consolation of Christendom. And now in this year of 1866 a work

similar but much more atrocious—for the deceit of a traitor is far worse than the violence of an open enemy—is being accomplished by the insidious policy of Princes, and the apathy of Europe. But of this last instance it behoves us not to speak. For the end is not yet. A year or two will, I feel sure, make of this present calamity a more illustrious example than the rest. For in proportion to the seeming weakness of God's cause, and to the strength of the enemies of the Church, so do I confidently await a still more signal and triumphant deliverance. All history confirms the fact, that the Catholic Church is never so strong as when she is in her hour of greatest weakness. For her extremity is God's opportunity. It was when the boat appeared to be on the point of sinking, and the fears and prayers of the Apostles waked Jesus from His sleep, that the Lord arose, and rebuked the winds and waves, and made the tempest give place to a great and lasting calm.*

My brethren, throughout this necessarily cursory review of the Church's fortunes, the same paradox presents itself to our contemplation which we noticed in the life of Jesus. There is the same visible weakness, the same opposition and contempt from the powerful, from diplomatists Princes and Governments of the world, the same poverty, the same unchanging triumph. But I must venture on one more remark. What is true of the external or historic life of the mystical Body of Christ, is true also of her internal and spiritual life. For, in the chief fountains of that inner life, God has maintained the same economy.

* St. Matt. viii. 26.

He has, in admirable harmony with the mystery of the Incarnation, chosen to sacramentalize matter. He has elevated it to be a vehicle of grace. But what is the material element which He has chosen? Is it what is costly;—gold, and silver, and diamonds, and precious stones? Or is it some new and marvellous creation of His power? No; it is none of these. The grace of Christ is clothed as poorly as was Christ Himself. Nay, Christ Himself in the Eucharist is as poorly clothed as when He was on earth. What then has He chosen for the matter of His Sacraments? Water, bread, wine, and oil. These are His pre-determined outfit for conquering this world of souls.

Nevertheless, though the Church be thus weak on every hand;—though she be poor;—though she may boast of no great armies, no navy, no ships of commerce, no prosperous trade, no abundant revenues;—though Cæsar has been in almost every age directly opposed to her;—though revolutionary sects, powerful heresies, and open infidelity have tried their worst against her; she has lasted through calm and storm, through intermittent times of revolution and anarchy, mid wars and political convulsions which have seen the birth and death of many kingdoms, for eighteen hundred years, the oldest throne in Europe. Here is the greatest enigma in ancient or modern history. Can rationalism explain it? Can the sceptic with his fashionable common-places afford us a satisfactory solution? No; neither of them. But St. Paul can. He knew well her inner life, the secret of her sacramental grace. He knew of the Blessed Spirit, Who abideth in her. And he has given us his answer in the words

of my text: *Quod infirmum est Dei fortius est hominibus*—"The weakness of God is stronger than men."

To apply these conclusions to the age in which we live, and to that public opinion, which is the most powerful tyrant of our times. Surely there is no one who does not perceive that the weakness of the Christmas cradle is the strength of God against modern principles. The great idol of the hour is temporary success, the short-lived victory of force; or what has been called the inexorable logic of facts. In the actual political philosophy of the nineteenth century might is right; and an action is deemed praiseworthy, whatever it may be, if only it attain its ends. Thus, for instance, a late war was condemned by all just-judging men of whatever class of opinion throughout the length and breadth of Europe. It is now applauded to the echo. Why? Because it was a success. So again a course of low intrigue, which the calm voice of after history will surely set down as being the basest and most immoral in the annals of time, is now elevated to the height of the heroic, because it has succeeded in reducing the Church of Christ, as it would seem, to her last extremity. Yet even the anonymous preachers of our new philosophy are not slow to admit that such proceedings have destroyed all force of treaties, and have sapped the very foundations of international law. The only law which now exists is the law of the strongest; and the old picture of the wolf and the lamb is indelibly photographed on the present map of the world. It has resulted from all this that revolution is nowa-

days our model form of government; and unstrained license is undermining political unity. We have nothing to fall back upon but brute force. As I look back to the Christmas cradle. And I see Herod and his satellites at their work again; all that much shedding of blood, and another siege of Jerusalem in the distance with all its horrors. But in the midst of the anarchy and violence, I still see and thank God! the Child of Mary with the government upon His shoulders. Why, O ye men of the world, ye self-chosen prophets of this age, do you not learn a lesson, which you have so much need to learn, at the feet of the Babe of Bethlehem? He will tell you that "the weakness of God is stronger than men;"—that eternal justice and high principle, though stripped of material and visible strength, must ever live in the strength of its own indestructible vitality;—and that the unjust violence of brute force, or the wily stratagems of an indirect diplomacy, even though backed by the noisy plaudits of public opinion, are weakest *then* when they have worked their will, and gained the day. He will teach you that temporary success in evil is synonymous with eventual defeat; and that the calm progress of the years will indicate the supremacy of truth. He will teach you that weakness will overcome strength, when the weakness is the weakness of faith, and the strength is the strength of right.

But I must make another complaint against you. On what principle of common honesty do you measure and judge the Church by these wretched principles of the moment? You are ready to confess

that these have not worked too well in earthly government; that they have first unarmed you, and then left you an easy prey to the next revolution that may wake up from the depths. You must admit that,—thanks to these principles, if you can call them such,—the nations of Europe are increasing their armies, planning coalitions, looking out for a prey, and that one hasty spark may bring on a universal conflagration. Why, then, when your new doctrine has so signally failed in its own special province, do you accept it as axiomatic, and measure the Church in your judgments by its length and breadth? It is true that she has neither large armies nor navies. It is quite true that her exchequer is for the most part an alms. It is true, moreover, that she has owed more than once the preservation of her metropolis to the faithful bayonets of a Christian people. I deny not that her commerce is as nothing; that she has not developed imports and exports; that she pays little heed to the comforts and luxuries of life. You look in vain for her manufactures and coal-pits. I allow that she is poor, weak;—what you call, behind the age. Her enterprise does not reach so high as to aim at speculation in the stock-exchange. Nay more, her custom-house may be as deficient as some of you say it is. But has she ever professed to adopt your principles as the rule of her action? Judge her by her own philosophy. Are her people moral, truly educated? Does she save souls for God and Heaven? Is she preserving the world from God's just vengeance by her prayers? Has her enterprise led her into mountain ranges and the far-off islands of the sea,

into the hovels of the poor, into the dark haunts of Paganism, to rescue souls from the devil? Has she martyrs of faith and martyrs of charity now, as in the olden time? Does she still attend upon every form of human suffering and human misery? If so, she may be weak, yet is she strong. And her strength shall support the weakness of the world.

Once more. I must in conclusion say that, as regards yourselves, these principles of materialism are a delusion and a snare. You measure the greatness and prosperity of a people by the diffusion of commodities and luxuries of life in its midst. You look out for commercial energy, habits of business, circulation of money, thronged markets. You think more of a felicitous budget than of the moral and religious miseries of a divorce bill, or of the importance of a measure for reforming our workhouses. Now I must say that this worship of materialism is one of the most distressing signs of our increasing national weakness. It is, too, most sternly rebuked by the divine philosophy of Bethlehem. Christ's Kingdom is a Kingdom of truth. He tells us so Himself. It is, therefore, an eternal Kingdom, because built upon the foundation of eternal truth;—of truth in the speculative order, which is the creed;—of truth in the practical order, which is the moral law, natural and positive. Christ's Kingdom is also a Kingdom of life: because it is begun, continued, perfected, by supernatural grace. But gold and silver, commerce, and business, and trade, though useful, and even to a certain extent necessary in their place, can never become part of her weapons of defence. They

belong to time ; she belongs to eternity. They can never satisfy man's highest aspirations. They may be rather hindrances and temptations, than helps to him, in his progress towards that one great end for which he was created. Christ conquered by means of visible weakness, poverty, and contempt. The Catholic Church, too, conquers by means of weakness, poverty, and contempt. And the nations and Governments of earth can only hope to preserve their stability and true peace, in so far as they more or less participate in the Church's spirit, and are guided by the Church's voice. Truth, and justice, and purity, and a lofty sense of right, and a hearty reverence for God, and a deep practical charity towards our neighbour,—these must come first. And then let money and worldly prosperity follow in their train, if God so will. This monstrous materialism, which chains us down to the lowest pursuits and ambitions of earth,—which makes a god of money,—which encourages fraud, mad speculation, and every form of secret injustice,—which poisons our food, checks the high effort of art, freezes human sympathies, deforms and dwarfs the intellect, and wastes the years of life,—which nurses the most vulgar and debased form of pride and self-conceit,—is unworthy of an intellectual being, unworthy of an heir of the ages that are past, unworthy of a soul destined for immortality, most utterly unworthy of a child of God, a member of Christ's mystical Body, and a destined inhabitant of the Kingdom of the Saints.

SERMON IV.

THE BIRTHDAY OF MARY'S CHILD.

ISAIAH ix. 6.

Parvulus enim natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis; et factus est principatus super humerum Ejus.

For a Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us; and the government is upon His shoulder.

WE make an annual commemoration this day, dearly beloved brethren in Jesus Christ, of an event which changed the whole current of the world's history, and reversed those principles that it holds most dear. It was an event which begat hope in the midst of despair, light in the midst of darkness, love in the midst of hatreds, emulations, and strife. It was an event which lifted up the human race from earth to Heaven; and sublimated man's nature by informing it with a supernatural life, which therefore was not its own, and which was in no sense its due. It was an event which created a new civilization,—introduced a new principle of government,—raised the family and its holiest ties, from the tomb wherein Paganism had buried them, to their legitimate place in the social order,—initiated a new moral code, which first startled, then puzzled, and at length absorbed

the will and intellect of the wisest, best, and noblest, throughout successive generations,—and gave to art a type of beauty infinite and free, welling from the inexpressible perfection of God's glory, in place of that sensuous type, ever running parallel with earth, which heathendom had nourished as its own. It was an event which caused a fresh thrill of ecstasy through the whole of the vast hierarchy of Heaven ; and, by an irresistible attraction, drew down the Angelic choir from their wonted places before the throne of God, to gladden this place of exile with their faultless canticles of praise. It was an event which commenced a world-enduring series of victories over hell and its powers of darkness, and shook the foul den to its centre. It was, lastly, an event which caused the Father's eye of love to rest again upon His handiwork ; and drew from His lips that blessing which had never been heard, save once, since the early morning of creation, when, looking upon the work of His all-wise munificence, He pronounced it to be very good.

Such is the event which we are met together, dear brethren, to celebrate again this year ; an event indeed past so far as we, the children of time, are concerned, yet ever living before God in the unchangeable *now* of His own self-complete eternity. For by one infinite act, which is Himself, all is at once before Him—past, present, and future. To Him there is no past or future, but one eternal present ; and He consequently sees the sweet Babe of Bethlehem now, as the wise men of the East, or the simple shepherd men saw Him some eighteen

hundred years ago. Let us then, dearly beloved of the Sacred Heart, look upon that picture as it shines out in its own mild Christmas beauty, as though we saw it in the light of the Divine Wisdom. It will explain its own virtue; and will perhaps suggest to our devout contemplation many pregnant thoughts about the Church's life. We shall get to understand how that vast tree, which has developed into such wonderful proportions in the course of ages, and now covers the nations with its shadow, owes its unity and life, its form and sap, to this the root from which it sprang. We shall see that the Cross was made out of the wood of the manger; and the Cross has become the measure of the world. But, as it would be impossible on the morning of a Festival like the present,—when the time of the sermon is necessarily limited, because of the unusual prolongation of our offices,—to attempt to embrace the whole subject, I would invite you to examine a sweet nosegay which lies close beside the cradle. It is made up of three unfading flowers, culled from the garden of Paradise;—the violet of humility, the red rose of charity, and the white lily of a wondrous virginity. Be these our theme to-day. And may our hearts be attuned, by a devout breathing in of their heavenly perfume, to join with Angels on this bright day of joy in a triumphant *Gloria in excelsis*.

The whole world seemed to have an instinctive presage of the advent of some great deliverer in the days of Cæsar Augustus. And it was looking out. But alas! it looked out in the wrong direction. It did not look there, where alone God's eyes were

fixed. The earth was lapt in universal peace ; and the Roman legions, scattered amid the various provinces of that vast Empire, were for once free from the harassing fatigues and dangers of war. The Emperor was occupied in his palace on the Palatine with the internal management of his vast dominions, and had just issued a decree for a general census of the whole population. And thus from the seven-hilled city on the Tiber, as from the great heart of the body, circulated the life-blood to its extremest limits. Rome was therefore the one central spot on the map of the civilized world. And the worship of Earth gathered to its gates. There was another city in the East, over which there shone a halo of purer light. That city was Jerusalem, the beauteous daughter of Sion. But even here the world had at last reared a throne. And Herod the King was doing his best, with the aid of courtiers and statesmen who flocked round him in his luxurious palace, to subjugate the Church of the Old Law to the supremacy of the State. Yet here was enthroned the worship of Judah. Here was concentrated the hope of the Jews. It was to centres such as these that the wise men of the age turned their expectant gaze. The Pagan devotee, the politicians of the imperial Court, the men of letters, would look to Rome ; the Scribe and Pharisee would look to Jerusalem, as the birthplace of Him, the Desired of all nations. And the one dream in the fond imagination of all was of a gorgeous earthly empire,—the glitter of gold, of silver, and of precious stones,—the pomp of power,—the pride of circumstance and place. What a disap-

pointment was in store for them! How strange a contrast! There was indeed to be a Kingdom, a universal Empire. But it was to be God's Kingdom, not man's. And God would fashion it according to His own wisdom. The King came, upon Whose shoulders was placed the government. He came at last; but not to Rome, not even to Jerusalem. It was to Bethlehem He came,—a small country-town not far off. Go we reverently, and look in upon Him with the simple shepherds. Behold the new-born King. His palace is the stable of an inn;—His cradle, a manger;—His royal robes of empire, coarse swaddling-clothes;—His retinue, the ox and ass;—His luxuries, darkness and cold. The world knows nothing of His advent; sleeps, and awakes to its day of labour, as of old. No change or unusual stir is there in the palace of the Palatine. In Herod's Court there is no sudden festival of rejoicing. The Temple of Sion is hushed in the solitude of night; and no wondrous light shines out from its Holy of Holies. There are no hosannas ascending up on high from the streets of Jerusalem. The next morning again, as in the years and days gone by, is offered on the altar before the sanctuary the early sacrifice. All goes on in the usual routine. Meanwhile, God has been born on earth. And no one was by, save Joseph and Mary, and the two animals beside the crib. Here is weakness of a truth. Here is a strange beginning for a world-wide Empire. If the event had been announced to the sleeping world by some Prophet of the Lord, what would the most of its inhabitants have thought of the announcement?

Human pride revolts against such an abyss of self-abasement. As St. Austin beautifully remarks, "The day of the Angels is little indeed among the days of men." What! shall poverty and contemptible obscurity rule the world? Yes, sooth to say, it shall. Learn the new lesson of humility which is taught you by the Incarnate God, and you shall understand the riddle. You shall know the inner life of this poor outside. You shall hear over the cradle that ancient prophecy of the evangelical Prophet, "For a Child is born to us; and a Son is given to us." Mark well the words, if you would realize the mystery. He is a Child, for He is Man; He is a Son, for He is Son of God. As a Child, He is born,—born of Mary; as a Son, He is given,—given by the Father. As Eusebius of Edessa expresses it in words full of beauty, "He was *given* in His divine nature; *born* of a Virgin. He was *born*, Whose sun was about to set; *given*, Who knew no beginning. He was *born*, Who was younger than His mother; *given*, than Whom the Father is not more ancient. He was *born*, Who should die; *given*, from Whom life should be born. So He Who was, was *given*; He Who was not, was *born*. On the one side, dominion; on the other, humility." It is because of this, that He shall have the government upon His shoulder. For His name is, *Admirabilis, Consiliarius, Deus, Fortis, Pater venturi sæculi, Princeps pacis*—"Wonderful, the Counsellor, God, the Strong One, Father of the world to come, Prince of Peace."* And therefore *multiplicabitur Ejus imperium, et pacis*

* Isaías ix. 6.

non erit finis—"His empire shall be multiplied; and of peace there shall be no end."* This is the secret of the riddle;—a God made Man, a God clothed in poverty and contempt, naked of comforts, and pomp, and majesty,—strength in weakness,—the Divine omnipotence of humility. And with such arms the Christmas Child in His very cradle strangles the serpent; and sets His foot upon the world. This, this is the root of the tree of life;—Life eternal born into the world;—the Light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, in darkness;—the Son of God, Son of Mary;—the Wisdom and express Image of the Father, a Babe in swaddling-clothes;—the Eternal Word, Whom the Father generated from everlasting while He spake His own infinite essence, mute, an Infant;—the Power of God's majesty, carried about helpless in the arms of His own creatures;—the inexhaustible Riches of the divine perfections, poor and stript of comfort;—the Glory of Heaven, unhonoured;—the King of Angels, a carpenter's reputed Child. Thus does the cradle of Bethlehem give us the text of that sermon which the whole life of Jesus preaches from the nativity to the crucifixion, *Discite a Me; quia mitis sum et humilis corde; et invenietis requiem animabus vestris*—"Learn of Me; for I am meek and humble of heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls."† How small the seed! how world-spreading the tree which grows from it! Humility has crowned Him King; and therefore He is called the Wonderful. Yes, and the government is upon His shoulders.

* Isaias ix. 7.

† St. Matt. xi. 29.

For such is the attractive virtue of His divine humility, that all peoples and tongues and nations and tribes of the earth gather together at His feet, and bow low before His footstool. And Kings receive Him as the Counsellor, and accept their crowns from His hands. And upward spring from earth His many palaces, in whose magnificent foreshadowings of the City of the Blest, the ascending lines are as the lifting up of holy hands to God. And music new born, with its complex web of mingling harmonies, salutes Him the good, Him the wise, Him the powerful. And painting and sculpture, won over to His cradle, express on canvass or in stone this Infant God reposing on His Mother's arms. And thus have the words of my text been accomplished, "The government is upon His shoulders." The intellect of man needed governance; and He is the Truth. The will and heart of man needed governance; and He is the one and only Good. The imagination and affections of man needed governance; and He is the only Beautiful. But God, the true, the good, the beautiful, was too high and infinite for us to grasp Him. So God became Man; that man might reach to God. It was to be the government of the heart and will and intellect. And divine humility solved the difficulty. The Divine Child has gained His empire over all; because by an act of incomprehensible self-annihilation He stripped Himself of all. And now, too, in these latter days, when old Paganism would fain come back to earth under a new disguise, and the kingdoms of this world have forgotten the lesson of the carpenter's Son, and

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poverty and humility are out of date, forced to retire before a proud, sensual, and effeminate civilization ;— even in this our day, the Empire of the Christmas Babe extends from pole to pole ; and above two hundred millions have gathered again this day round the manger of Bethlehem, and offered up their gifts to the new-born King.

Such is the innate power of the heavenly virtue of humility. It yields to God ; and God yields to it. It nestles, as a violet, on the ground ; and, safe from storm and tempest, it fills with its celestial perfume this valley of tears. It becomes great by the power of God, because it is so small in its own eyes. It is God's own virtue. For it was first seen in the Christmas cradle, though Prophet and Patriarch had borrowed it beforehand. It is a plant of Paradise, and Jesus transplanted it to earth. The world at large had never seen or heard of it before. It first despised and jeered at it ; and then marvelled, as it saw the vigour of its growth and the wondrous virtue of its fruits. The devil had taught men pride and independence ; the little Jesus comes to teach humility.

But, my brethren, the true Christian humility, of which I speak, is quite opposed to that false counterfeit of it, to which the new religions of our day have given birth. There is a pride which apes humility,—a pride which depreciates itself in words, but wills not that its self-depreciation should be believed,—a pride which quarrels with its own confession when repeated from another's lips,—a pride which feeds itself upon its acted lowliness. This is not a virtue, but a despicable imposture. The

humility which Jesus Christ commends is founded on an accurate knowledge of ourselves, as we truly are in the light of God. Therefore it is in harmony with simple truth. We only need to know ourselves thoroughly, in order to be forced to form at least an humble judgment of ourselves. For of what can we boast? Nobility of birth is an advantage which we share with race-horses and bulls. We can never, wealthy as we may be, pretend to such riches as are hoarded up in the bosom of our mother earth. The collected wisdom of the age is as nothing compared with that of the simplest and meanest of God's servants, so soon as he has attained to the beatitude of Heaven. Moreover, all these advantages, if advantages they be, are gifts of God. Nothing is there that we can call our own, save our sins. And these will never make us proud. When we see ourselves in some degree as God sees us, there is a temptation, it is true, which haunts us; but it is not pride. No; it is the despondency of self-disgust. But true humility carries us scatheless through the trial; for by its own sweet virtue it transforms diffidence of ourselves into a more entire confidence in God.

*Domine Jesu, noverim me, noverim Te.
Ut oderim me, et amem Te;
Humiliem me, exaltem Te;
Diffidam mihi, confidam in Te.*

Lord Jesus, may I know myself, may I know Thee.
That I may hate myself, and love Thee;
That I may humble myself; and exalt Thee;
That I may distrust myself, and trust in Thee.*

* St. Augustine.

Such humility, however, if it would be practical, can only grow in us by humiliations. This will, I think, explain some little of the mystery of the Christmas stable. Jesus teaches us our catechism by His own example.

There is another flower in the Christmas nosegay, more fragrant and more beautiful than even the meek violet. It is the rose. Contemplate once more, my dearly beloved brethren, the sweet Babe of Bethlehem. Call to mind once more that He is the very God Incarnate, Who has thus condescended to become our first Christmas gift. It is He—the eternal, consubstantial Word of the Father—Who has consented to endure this abyss of humiliation. And why all this? He Himself will tell you, if you listen. Hear what He says: *Deliciæ meæ esse cum filiis hominum*—"My delight is to be with the sons of men."* It is pure charity, then, which is His motive. Hear Him again: *Ego veni, ut vitam habeant, et abundantius habcant. . . . Ego sum Pastor bonus. Bonus Pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis*—"I came that they might have life, and I came in such humiliation and to such suffering that they might receive the life of Heaven in more abundant measure. . . . I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep."† It is again charity that moved Him. Once more. Listen to the words of one of His Apostles: *Christus dilexit Ecclesiam, et Scipsum tradidit pro ea*—"Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for her."‡ And again: *Qui dilexit me, et tradidit Semetipsum pro me*

* Prov. viii. 31. † St. John x. 10, 11. ‡ Ephes. v. 25.

—"Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."* And, finally, consider well the words of the Beloved Disciple, who thus speaks of his Divine Master: *Qui dilexit nos, et lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine Suo*—"Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood."† Still to the last is it that same answer,—charity.

I would that we all realized this love of our dear Lord, devout brethren, more practically than we do. But the sensuality and materialism of our times stand sadly in the way. And it is perhaps for this reason—if so, what a fresh and most touching proof of His unalterable love it is!—that He has reserved the special devotion of His Sacred Heart for these days, wherein the love of so many has grown cold. For in His Sacred Heart the riches of His exhaustless and disinterested charity are enshrined, as in their own chosen Tabernacle. And if there be one mystery of His life more than another where the love of His Sacred Heart is alluring, and stript of all terror, it is that of the Nativity. In it the charity of Jesus is, so to speak, domesticated. It is clothed in the simplicity of childhood, and expresses Itself in those gleaming eyes of Infancy, turned upward towards Its Mother's fondest gaze. It takes to Itself the purest and most captivating form of human love, that It may melt our hearts, and bind them to Its cradle.

And this supernatural love it is, my brethren, that, pouring forth from the Church's Heart (which is the Holy Ghost), binds together all the members of the

* Gal. ii. 20.

† Apoc. i. 5.

Church in one mystical body, and unites them by closest sympathy, each with the other. It is this charity, which chooses as its own special property the poor, the desolate, the oppressed, the mourner; and lives with a personal interest amid all their distress and misery. There is a so-called charity or benevolence, common enough amongst us, which thrives on universals and abstractions,—a mechanical charity, which works out its speculative philanthropy by deputy, by means of committees, bazaars, subscription-lists,—a charity which aims at relieving misery in general, but cares little or nothing for the miserable in particular,—a charity which obeys the exigence of natural instinct, rather than the supernatural grace of God. Such is not the charity of Christ or of His Church. For this latter is practical, self-denying, individual. It goes itself to the poor and the distressed; rejoices with them that rejoice, and weeps with them that weep. Its method of relief is not wholesale, if I may so express myself, but retail. It sees in each particular sufferer a representative of Jesus Christ, goes out to meet him, and loves him for his very suffering. And this charity seems at Christmas-tide to awaken into a brighter flame. I do not know anything more beautiful in its way than the practice,—happily so common in this country,—of remembering the new-born Child in His chosen substitutes, and welcoming His birthday by a more abundant charity bestowed upon His poor. *Amen dico vobis, quamdiu fecistis uni ex his fratribus Meis minimis, Mihi fecistis*—"Verily I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these the least of My

brethren, you did it to Me."* Remember this, dear brethren, in your offerings to-day.

But there is one other flower of which I must speak before concluding. The lily is ever mingled with the rose in the Christmas nosegay. How, at least on the Feast of the Nativity, could we ever dream of separating Mary from Jesus? Mary conceived Jesus. Mary brought Him forth. Mary gave Him suck. Who would have the heart to separate the Mother from the new-born Child? The simple shepherds, guided by an Angel's message, came down from the cold mountain to find their Saviour out. Where did they find Him? In the lap of Mary. The three Kings set out from their distant home to visit Him Who was born King of the Jews. Where did they find Him? In the lap of Mary. And even before His birth He travelled to the hilly country near Jerusalem, that He might consecrate His own forerunner yet unborn. Who brought Him there? It was Mary. In what sanctuary was He hidden when He arrived there? In the pure womb of Mary. Who took Him to Egypt? Mary. Who brought Him back to Nazareth? Still it is Mary. Who tended His infancy,—washed, dressed, and laid Him to sleep in His cradle? Who taught Him first to walk, and watched His every step, and nursed Him in her arms when He was weary? It was Mary. Round whose neck did He circle His little arms, fondling with infant love? Mary is the answer still. Strange is it, then, that men should fear lest love of Mary should seduce us from her Child. But stranger still that any

* St. Matt. xxv. 40.

one can think on that tender picture of Christmas, and yet should turn away without one movement of the heart towards her to whom we owe our Saviour, and who watched over His infancy with all a mother's care.

My dear brethren, it shall not be so with us. For we are children of the Church. And in her divinely-constituted rounds of worship the names of Jesus and Mary are ever intertwined, and form together the one key-note of her continuous harmony of praise. We know that "the flower grows out of the root of Jesse,"* and that the royal Mother must share in the glory and the power of her Son. We know, by glad experience, that increasing love of Mary brings us nearer and nearer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We know that, as brothers of Christ our Lord by divine adoption, Mary is our Mother as well as His; that the Mother of the Head must be Mother of the members too; and that therefore we are only obeying the dictate of nature and the precept of the law when we honour her, who as far surpasses the mother that begat us, as the regeneration of God and the life of Heaven surpasses earthly generation and the gift of natural life. We know that He, Who gave us the law of honouring our parents, would never allow her, whom He had chosen to be His only earthly Parent, to become other than highest in dignity and grace above the rest of His visible and invisible creation; and that Mary is therefore Immaculate Queen of all the hierarchies of Heaven. We know that her intercession must have an

* Isa. xi. i.

efficacy which far exceeds that of all the united supplications of Saints and Angels, because it is invested with the sweet prerogative of a mother's authority. We then, who walk in the light of the true faith, and are directed by the infallible guidance of the Catholic Church, have no fear lest we should honour and worship Mary too much, or confound her supremacy over all created intelligences with the divine and incommunicable Monarchy of her Son Jesus. For us these two sweet names of Jesus and Mary are a tower of strength. They are our watchword in temptation, our solace in affliction, our music in joy, our medicine in sickness. They quench the rising fire of concupiscence. They calm the tempest of anger, expel the demon of jealousy, open the closed hand of avarice, bow down the uplifted head of pride, and melt the ice of a worldly selfishness. They are a very sacrament of love, the highest jewels in the Church's casket, the antepast of Heaven, terror of devils, joy of Angels. May our lips never tire of pronouncing them. Let our morning prayer ever send them, first of all, to open the gates of Heaven. Let them be the last words we utter ere we sleep. Let them be the nursery-song of our childhood, the brightness of our youth, the treasure of our manhood, the comfort of our declining years. And on that last day of life, when the soul is about to wing its way from the threshold of time, and the judgment is near, and we, in that deep solitude of a passing spirit, are about to begin a state of existence as yet untried, may the names of Jesus and Mary be the last words which shall escape our

fluttering lips,—our one passport to the presence of the Judge.

To conclude. On the first Christmas night there shone before the eyes of the simple shepherds a light from heaven, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. And choirs of Angels startled the midnight air with their *Gloria in excelsis*. Let us, too, lift up our voices, and chant in triumph before the cradle—"Glory to God in the highest." Glory to God, for He has come down to earth ;—glory to God, for He has become Son of man that we might become sons of God ;—glory to God in the highest, Who is Mary's Child, the Babe of Bethlehem ;—glory to Him, Whose Sacred Heart is meek and humble ;—glory to Him, Whose charity is everlasting ;—glory to Him, Who lies weak and trembling in His Mother's arms. Glory be to God, Who has chosen one of our race to be His own tabernacle, His one earthly Parent, "for He has done great things to her, and holy is His name." Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost ; *Et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis*—"And on earth peace to men of good-will." Peace has come down on earth. The deluge has at length subsided, and the heavenly Dove comes back to us with the olive-branch. Peace on earth ; for He, our great Christmas gift, has made both one, God and man, having broken down the middle wall of partition. Peace on earth, because we are made at peace with God, with ourselves, and with one another. Such peace is there for men of good-will,—for such as learn the lesson of Bethlehem and practice it,—who court not money, or rank, or esteem, power, luxury,

or comfort, but train their souls in the humility of Jesus. For such is there peace ; a peace which echoes back another "Glory to God in the highest," of Whose grace it comes. Let us then rejoice before the cradle of our new-born King. For "the government is upon His shoulder," and "He must reign, till He shall have put all His enemies under His feet."* He must reign, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. "And the enemy Death shall be destroyed the last."† And that shall be, when Jesus shall come once more, and gather earth's countless generations to the valley of Josaphat. Then shall the Church on earth join the Church triumphant in the clouds "to meet the Lord in the air."‡ And when the vast procession of the redeemed shall have passed through the gates of the celestial city, an eternal Christmas shall begin ; and, before the throne of the Incomprehensible, surrounded by the halo of the Divine glory, shall be seen for ever and for ever the Virgin Mother and the Babe of Bethlehem, the one object of praise and worship after God. "Glory to God in the highest," and let all creatures answer and say, "Amen."

* 1 Cor. xv. 25.

† 1 Cor. xv. 26.

‡ 1 Thess. iv. 16.

SERMON V.

CHRISTIAN FAITH THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

ST. MATT. ii. 2.

Vidimus stellam Ejus in Oriente, et venimus adorare Eum.

We have seen His star in the East, and have come to worship Him.

I SUPPOSE that there is no one calling himself a Christian, who does not feel, or at the least who does not acknowledge in theory, that the whole bone and marrow of life consists in finding Jesus Christ,—finding Heaven. Man necessarily tends to his own happiness and perfection; and that, in the supernatural order, consists in the vision of God. The way to happiness is the way to God. And the only way to God is Jesus Christ. He tells us so Himself: *Ego sum via*—"I am the Way," He says: *Nemo venit ad Patrem, nisi per Me*—"No one cometh to the Father, but by Me."* Therefore, in order to find happiness, we must find God; and to find God, we must find Jesus Christ.

I suppose, further, that no one, who believes in his Bible, will care to deny that we cannot find Jesus Christ, save by faith. For our Blessed Lord says,

* St. John xiv. 6.

Sic Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret, ut omnis qui credit in Eum, non percat, sed habeat vitam æternam—"God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."* And again, *Qui credit in Filium, habet vitam æternam; qui autem incredulus est Filio, non videbit vitam, sed ira Dei manet super eum*—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."† And again, *Qui credit in Me, non credit in Me, sed in Eum Qui misit Me*—He that believeth in Me, doth not believe in Me only, but rather in Him that sent Me."‡ And St. John the Apostle says, *Qui credit in Filium Dei, habet testimonium Dei in se*—"He that believeth in the Son of God hath the testimony of God in himself."§ Once more St. Paul assures us that *Christum habitare per fidem in cordibus vestris*—"Christ dwells in our hearts by faith."|| And indeed all the Epistles of this great Apostle of the Gentiles are full of monitions, touching the importance and necessity of faith.

It is very plain, then, that it is a matter of the highest importance to understand precisely what faith is, and in what it consists, and what are the concomitant dispositions of mind which it would seem to require. Yet, my dear brethren in Jesus Christ, there is not a word which has been subjected to graver misconceptions or to more false interpretations.

* St. John iii. 16. † St. John iii. 36. ‡ St. John xii. 44.

§ 1 St. John v. 10.

|| Eph. iii. 17.

for the last three hundred years, than this word faith. Some false teachers have made it to mean an assurance of salvation, which, so far from being a supernatural virtue, is a wicked and dangerous presumption. Others have gratuitously identified it with a sort of religious sentiment or emotion, which it would be difficult to define, but which,—no matter the shape in which it is presented before us,—is not the faith of which the Gospels and Apostolic Epistles speak.

I will make another observation, which is not the less true, because it may startle some who hear me ;—and it is this. There is nothing to which the whole tone of public opinion in England is so diametrically opposed, as the habit of Christian faith. I think I shall be able to make this clear in the sequel. And I feel sure, devout brethren, that you will forgive me for forestalling the great Feast of next Sunday,* if I lead you on to my subject by introducing you into the company of the three Kings of the East, who set out from their homes to find Jesus during the first Christmas-tide. They were the first-fruits of the Gentiles ;—the first of our ancestry to whom Christ was revealed. And we may therefore reasonably believe that they were Divinely appointed to be our pattern. Do any of you, my hearers, want to find Christ, as they found Him? Do you desire during this festive season to approach the stable of Bethlehem, and to adore Him and offer to Him of your gifts, as they did? I hope to be able to show you that their history will instruct you how to find

* The Epiphany.

out the right road, and that their spirit, if you make it your own, will prevent you from remaining in the palace of Herod, and will lead you on to the Divine humility of the Christmas cradle, there to enjoy the presence of Jesus, Joseph, and Mary. But at the outset, my brethren, I request your prayers; for prayer is omnipotent. Pray for the preacher, that, heedless of man's judgment, he may declare the simple truth of God; pray for yourselves, that God's grace may descend upon you in copious measure, without which all human effort is vain.

The three wise men of the East, who came to adore the new-born Saviour, were, according to the most commonly received opinion of the Fathers and theologians of the Church, Arabian Kings. They lived therefore in the country of Balaam, son of Beor, whose remarkable prophecy had lived for more than fourteen hundred years in the popular tradition of the Arab tribes: *Orietur stella ex Jacob, et consurget virga de Israel*—"A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel."* They had also heard tell, as the Fathers assure us, of the more recent oracle of the Sibyl; and had consequently been looking out night after night, during the years of their earthly pilgrimage, for the expected sign. At last it appears,—a new and unwonted luminary in the air. It is enough. The day of promise has dawned upon them. They at once accept the heavenly message. Without a second thought, they put away from them considerations of

* Numbers xxiv. 17.

home, family, expectations, the inclemency of the season and of the dangers of the road, and set out on what the clever, practical men of the neighbourhood would call their mad journey. In vain many of their sage friends point out to them that this so-called star might only be a natural exhalation of the air, or some new astronomical phenomenon subservient to the ordinary laws of nature;—that the whole thing was uncertain at the best;—that common prudence would suggest to them the expedience of waiting and fulfilling the obligations of their state, till at all events they should have acquired some more definite information from Judæa;—that to act in such a manner would subject them to the well-founded charge of gross superstition;—that the people, in the places through which they would have to pass, would treat them as lunatics;—and that their worldly fortunes must necessarily suffer, even if they escaped a violent death; a contingency which was by no means improbable. It was all of no use. They saw and believed. Man's counsel was, Wait; God's voice said, Follow the star. They believed God's Word, as spoken by the mouth of the Prophet; and they acted on that belief. So they set out at once; while their counsellors went back to their homes, some irritated, others shaking their heads and pitying their folly. They meanwhile went on, their eyes fixed on the star. And that supernatural lamp of heaven led the way, accompanying them in their wanderings, beckoning them on as they travelled, and sweetly shining over their heads while they slept. With one exception, it was ever their

guide and fellow-traveller, till it brought them to Jesus. And then it vanished.

I see in all this a lively picture of Christian faith. For the mysteries which we believe,—what is called in theology the material object of faith,—are as absent from us, as was the Divine Child from those Arab Kings in their native home. It is of the very essence and nature of the object of faith, that it should be obscure, hidden in cloud, removed from sight or intuition. This is clearly taught us by the great Apostle St. Paul, who says, *Est fides rerum sperandarum substantia, argumentum non apparentium*—“Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the argument, or deductive proof, of things not seen as yet.”* “For if we see them, why do we yet hope for them?”† We do not assent, then, to these dogmatic truths of revelation, whatever they may be, because we see them,—because they are evident. If they were evident, we should not believe, but know or intue, them. In such case the intellect would no longer be free; just as the eye is not free to perceive or not to perceive, as it pleases, in clear presence of its object. It would be forced to assent by its natural constitution; and all merit would consequently cease. Why then do we believe these truths, if they are not evident to our intellect,—if we cannot understand them? Surely God would never enjoin us to do anything that was repugnant to reason! Surely He would never wish us to assent to certain declarations, which we do not and cannot comprehend, without a motive! You are right, my

* Hebr. xi. 1.

† Rom. viii. 24.

friends. God would never do what you say. And He has given us a motive, the very highest and most secure that man could have. This motive is no other than the authority of God's own immutable Word, which is what theologians call the formal object of faith. The Christian, therefore, believes everything which God has revealed,—not because he understands or sees the evidence of these truths (for this he does not and cannot do),—but because, with the docility of a child, he reposes on the indefectibility of God's infinitely perfect truth. If once he is sure that God has spoken, he believes without a moment's hesitation; whatever philosophers so called, or men of physical science, or the geologist, or the political economist, may have to say against it. His motto is that saying of Holy Writ, *Est autem Deus verax; omnis autem homo mendax*—"God is the truth; and every man is a liar in comparison with Him."* He is content to trust in God's authority. If he were certain that God had declared white to be black, he would believe it. And, in so doing, he would be a wiser man than the scoffer who should laugh or sneer at him. For our senses may deceive us; but God is that infinite Truth, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived. He does wisely, therefore, to prefer infallible authority to fallible semblance. He does wisely to repose in the infinite light of the Truth itself by unwavering faith, even though that light be hid in cloud, and shine not as yet before the eye of his soul.

But the difficulty, and consequently the merit, of

* Rom. iii. 4.

the act of faith, is not yet exhausted. We have hardly neared it yet. For no reasonable man, who believes in a God of infinite and immutable Truth, would be backward to own that, if we could once have evident demonstration of a Divine revelation,—if we could once clearly prove that God has spoken,—he would be mad to withhold his assent to what has been so made known. But it is of the nature of the formal object of faith most especially, that it in turn should be obscure, inevident. No physical proof has been granted to us that God has made such and such a revelation. We are not indeed left without proofs in the moral order; but they are not of such a kind as to compel our assent. And it is here, on the very threshold of faith, that reason is allowed—nay, is bound—to come in to our help. It is her province to examine the motives of credibility, as they are called—*i.e.*, in other words, the motives which are put before us for believing that such a revelation has really come from God.

And the three wise men become the pattern for such as have not as yet found Jesus, but are seeking Him. They first of all give themselves up to the miraculous leading of the star. That star leads them to the Priesthood of God's Church at Jerusalem. They are then taught by the Priests where to find Jesus. And they find Him there; and, finding, adore Him. What can more exactly and admirably delineate the proper course of action for either the infidel or heretic or schismatic, who is, in right earnest, seeking his way to the Christmas Child? Miracles lead him to the Church; the Church leads

him to Jesus. There is no more convincing proof of a Divine mission than the gift of miracles. Our Lord appeals to them Himself as the proof of His Messiahship. For He says to the incredulous Jews, *Si non facio opera Patris Mei, nolite credere mihi. Si autem facio; et si Mihi non vultis credere, operibus credite*—"If I do not the works of My Father, do not believe in Me; but if I do, even if ye will not believe Me for My own sake, at least believe My works."* And again, *Opera, quæ Ego facio in nomine Patris Mei, hæc testimonium perhibent de Me*—"The works which I do in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me."† A man hears that God has revealed certain truths to man; and that it is necessary, in order to be saved, to believe in them. But who can tell him what precisely these truths are? He needs a teacher. Many offer themselves to give him the required information; yet each one has a different tale to tell. He then, as a man of prudence, examines their credentials. He exercises his reason in sifting the sufficiency of the motives, which should induce him to yield himself up to the guidance of one rather than of the other. And the new star appears to guide him to the Church of God. He finds, we will say, a world-wide body, whose first creation was miraculous,—whose continued preservation is miraculous,—whose political life and unity are miraculous,—whose power over men's hearts is miraculous,—whose whole history is miraculous; a body, moreover, which ceases not to assert that it has the gift of miracles within it even to

* St. John x. 37, 38.

† St. John x. 25.

this hour, and challenges the sceptic to investigate the justice of its claims. The star has evidently brought him to the Temple at Jerusalem, and leaves him there. He submits himself with childlike simplicity to the teaching of his infallible guide, and at once finds Jesus and immortal truth within its sanctuary. This is the whole process of faith. The inquirer begins by believing the Church, because his reason is convinced of the truth of her Divine mission and authority, by the credentials which she submits to his candid examination. But he rests not here. The Church's office is to lead him to faith,—to lead him to Jesus. He therefore listens to her voice, and learns the articles of faith from her lips. She teaches him what they are. But he accepts, assents to them, only on the authority of God's Word. He believes that God has revealed these mysteries. Away, then, with mere difficulties of physical science, whatever they may be;—away with pride of human wisdom;—away with presumptuous doubt. God has spoken. It is enough. With heart and soul he utters for the first time his *Credo*. The act of faith is complete. He is now really and truly a Christian believer.

Would you then conclude, my dearly beloved brethren, from what I have just said, that such a sublime and difficult intellectual act as this is the mere work of unassisted human effort? If so, you have indeed misunderstood me. No; the whole process is too heavenly, too supernatural, to be attempted by the weakness of man's unaided strength. The bright star shone not on the eyes of the Magi

only, it shone also with its own celestial light on their hearts. It was God's grace which prompted them to follow its guidance. And God's grace is ever invisibly working with us on our journey towards truth ; suggesting thoughts, enlightening the perception, inspiring the will with high desires and yearnings after better things. But do not, therefore, deceive yourselves, ye poor souls that as yet live in the darkness of error, by imagining that this grace is reserved for a few chosen ones. No ; it is not so. God is far too merciful a Father thus to restrict His gifts. His grace is ever ready for each and all. He is only too willing to give it. He only waits for the first faintest proof of a desire, to begin His work of love ; and He often does not wait even for that, but forestalls our wishes. You will never know till after death the vast multitude of graces,—coming in upon you so quietly that in the din of life you failed to notice them,—which He has been constantly bestowing upon you. Solemn impressions in a Catholic Church ;—convictions which have arisen within your mind while reading a prayer-book, or a spiritual or controversial work ;—aspirations after God ;—uneasiness at your present state ;—remorse for your sins or fear of God's judgments, excited perchance by a sermon ;—a sudden feeling of warm devotion wakened up in you most mysteriously by some solemn ceremonial, at Mass or Benediction,—all these were the workings of God's grace, calling you to the peace and unity of His Church. Believe me, when I say it, that God will never fail in doing His part towards your conversion. But He waits upon your will. You have

the awful power of thwarting His grace and love by your indifference. For He will not force Heaven upon you. If you are lost for ever,—if you never see God in His beauty,—if you are eternally shut out of Heaven,—it will be your own doing. You will never, *never*, be able to lay the blame on God.

You have now, I hope, devout brethren, a clear idea of the nature of faith. It is an unhesitating assent of the intellect to all the mysteries and truths of the Christian creed, because God, Who is the infallible Truth, and can neither deceive nor be deceived, has revealed them to His Church. We go to the Church, as to the guide who shall teach us what these mysteries are; because our reason is satisfied that there are motives sufficient to justify us in our belief that she is the Divinely appointed Evangelist of the nations. We are therefore ready to believe everything, without exception, which she assures us to be God's revelation. We do not pick and choose at pleasure. We do not presume to distinguish between, what have been called by some sectarians, essential and non-essential truths. For we say that all is essential for us, provided that God has revealed it. We cannot possibly suppose that God would have made known a truth, and then left it quite open to us to believe in it or no. If all has been revealed by God, all must be believed; for all comes to us on the same supreme authority. Furthermore, we have seen that to make an act of faith, it is necessary to be helped by God's grace; but we know that this grace will never fail us, if only we ask for, and earnestly seek it. For God

our Father loves us so, that He is only too willing to give it us.

Now I say that, if such be the nature of Christian faith, the whole spirit of English public opinion is diametrically opposed to it. If we calmly examine the tone adopted by the organs of such opinion on these matters, if we lend an ear to the ordinary course of conversation in all ranks of society, when religion is the topic (as it often is), one thing must inevitably strike us;—the evident ignorance of the fact that the act of faith is supernatural. In discussions about creeds and religions and the claims of different communions, the idea never seems to enter into men's minds, that a good fervent prayer to God would be more than half the battle. They discuss quite at their ease the most tremendous mysteries, just as though such truths were as open to the investigation of their private judgment, as the daily telegrams, or the last theory in physical science. There seems to be throughout an utter unconsciousness of the fact, that in an act of faith God by His grace takes the principal part. And what is, if possible, worse still, these controversialists do not seem to remember that the fortunes of an eternity hinge upon their decision of these questions, with which they make so free.

Again. What can be more notorious than the fact of the little account which our modern public opinion makes of prayer. Why is it that everywhere in our day active Religious Orders are praised,—when Religious Orders are praised at all,—at the expense of the contemplative? Why is it that the latter are

represented on all sides as idle, worthless, useless to society? It must be that men consider prayer to be idleness. It must be that they altogether disbelieve in its all but omnipotent power to draw down on a nation countless graces, and to preserve it from unnumbered impending chastisements. They cannot realize the fact, that corporal or spiritual works of mercy, heroic labours and indefatigable zeal owe all their efficacy and success to the uplifted hand of prayer; and that without it they are but as "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."* No, devout brethren, our modern civilization does not believe in prayer. Yet is it the noblest and most arduous of labours, and the most useful in its fruits. The wiselings of this wondrous age are free to own that a man is truly working, who, by the study of languages ancient and modern, prepares himself for his appointed duties in this transitory life; and yet they denounce as idle those who work yet harder to learn a language, which will serve them for an eternity in Heaven. If the very life of man is his pathway to God;—if every action and energy of his being is more God's action than his own;—if God is more nearly one with him, than his soul is with his body;—if the fate of nations, and the whole evolution of the world's history, are directed by the Divine providence towards the accomplishment of Its own self-elected end;—if the purposes of the Creator are the happiness of the creature—then must prayer be the vital breath of man, preserving him in spiritual health, giving him strength against

* 1 Corinth. xiii. 1.

the inroad of corrupting humours and affections, uniting him to God, and putting him in harmony with God's omnipotent will. And is this, forsooth, idleness?

The real fact is, my brethren, that the whole tone of popular thought goes far to ignore, and even,—so far as it can,—to destroy, God's action on the world, and on the inner life of the individual soul. The supernatural is out of fashion. That the workings of God's grace on man, and the union of man's heart with God, are a living fact, more real, immeasurably more important, more pregnant with great results, than all the markets, or ports, or congresses, or wars, or railroads, telegrams, cables, needle-guns, mechanics' institutes, or British museums of the day,—the world cannot believe or even understand. It treats such a statement as a paradox, a simple unreality. Our age gives no practical credence to what it cannot see, taste, or feel. For the present it accepts the doctrine of the existence of a God as a pious speculative opinion. But, then, this its god is inert and living in the far distance. The Epicurean philosophy is, it would seem, the only true one. For it taught that the Supreme Being was too great to busy Himself with the trifling concerns of earth. He lets nature work according to its own primary laws; and never intervenes. Woe to the bigot who shall even hint that war, pest, storm, flood, bad harvests, may be God's punishment of sin. Man, too, is allowed to act, speak, think, as he wills. He is independent, under no control save what society and law impose. Government itself wells up from below;

its sanction comes not from above. Who in these days of liberalism would venture to assert openly with St. Paul, that "the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist purchase to themselves damnation?"*

It is this anti-Christian spirit of unbelief, which offers the greatest impediment to the spread of Divine truth. In order to possess the one only faith, it is necessary to become a disciple of the true Church. And the Catholic Church is ever presenting to the world the testimonials which she has received from God. How does the world treat them? I will let you see. Among her other proofs, she offers to all inquirers that of the many miracles, which are still going on within her pale. This was, as I have already pointed out, the very proof which Christ offered to the incredulous Jews. How is it received by public opinion in England? Does it take the alleged fact, sift the evidence, and cross-examine the witnesses? Does it, when an opportunity occurs, go and personally examine the phenomenon? It is this precisely which the Church invites it do. She does not claim for these miracles other evidence than what is commonly admitted in an ordinary question of fact. All she asks is, that such evidence should be impartially sifted, according to the wont of our common law-courts in matters of daily life. But this public opinion will not consent to do. The supposed fact, whatever it may be, is already condemned, before the witnesses are even heard. The news-

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

papers have taken care to bias the judgment of their readers from the first moment. And this they do, for the most part, by the dexterous use of some contemptuous or sarcastic epithet. For instance. It begins to be reported that a certain picture of our Lady has moved its eyes in presence of a multitude of spectators. Now it seems to me to be evident enough that God could work such a wonder, if He pleased, at all events as easily as He could out of the stones of Jerusalem raise up children unto Abraham.* No reasonable man doubts that God *can* do everything which is not a metaphysical impossibility. The only real question therefore is clearly this: *Has* He worked such a miracle? To satisfy myself of this, I must examine the evidence. Do our newspapers then adopt this equitable course? Quite the reverse. The matter is determined by a sort of antecedent probability. "God," say they, "works no miracles now. They have ceased long ago, if ever they existed. The whole story is a patent absurdity. We care nothing for your witness. They are all either knaves or dupes. We will throw merited contempt on the fable by an epithet, which shall henceforth distinguish it. Thus, therefore, we begin our article: What will our readers think of a renovation, in this age of progress and enlightenment, of the grossest superstition of the dark ages? Yet it seems we are to be condemned to listen once more to the veracious history of *winking Madonnas*." The cause is finished. Judgment has been pronounced. Some metropolitan

* St. Matt. iii. 9.

journal has uttered its voice. And through the length and breadth of England goes the phrase. "*Winking Madonnas*" is the heading of a series of leading articles in the provincial papers. It is adopted by the orators of Exeter Hall, and embodied in the penny tracts of the Protestant Alliance. The word has done its work. "*Winking Madonnas!*" What system of theology, or even revelation from God, could withstand so cogent an argument as this?

Again. There is a miracle which takes place annually at Naples in presence of the whole city, and of a vast crowd of foreigners of every nation. Thousands upon thousands of witnesses are ready, if they are required, to attest its truth. One of the most celebrated of our English chemists personally examined the phenomenon, and, though a Protestant, candidly owned that it exceeded all the natural agency of which physical science is cognizant. It is easy of investigation; for besides the vast number of ocular witnesses to the fact, the miracle is repeated year by year. Yet, what matter? Public opinion in England is resolved beforehand not to believe it. And so you must beware of referring to the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius; for the very mention of the word will be at once greeted with contemptuous laughter.

Yet again. It is a fact that does not admit of reasonable doubt, that—in an age which practically ignores the Passion of Christ—our merciful God, to recall it to our memory, has been pleased to decorate some of His servants with the sacred stigmata, or marks of the wounds of our suffering Redeemer.

This miraculous manifestation has appeared in the person of two poor women in the Tyrol. Besides a great multitude of witnesses of every country,—differing in rank, character, education, and religion,—we have the evidence of three clergymen of the religion established in this country, who went and carefully examined the miracle for themselves. Two of these were afterwards, by God's grace, converted to the Church; the third lived and died a Protestant minister. All the three bore public testimony to its truth. We have besides the witness of one who was, at the time, a captain in Her Majesty's navy and a Protestant. He went to the Tyrol, saw, believed, and was converted. An account of his visit, extracted from his journal, was published after his untimely death. One of these women I saw myself; the other had died, before I arrived in the Tyrol. Here were facts which at all events merited examination. One woman there was, with the wounds of the nails in her hands and feet, and of the spear in her side, and of the crown of thorns on her forehead, from which each Friday, as the day came round, streams of blood were wont to flow. She was miraculously supported without food for years by the Blessed Sacrament. Another woman had the same stigmata on hands and feet and side; and was carried out of the body, as I saw her, in continued ecstasies. Surely such wonders merited "a special correspondent," as much at least as the events of a German battle, or the imperial balls and dinner-parties of St. Petersburg. Yet, no. There is no possible use in inquiry or investigation. It must, it shall be, untrue. Public

opinion would rather believe captains in the English navy, and Oxford tutors, and noblemen, and ten thousand witnesses beside, to be arrant knaves and liars, or silly dupes at the best, rather than entertain the notion for a moment that God would dare to work a miracle in the full face of this nineteenth century. The story must be put down at once, and crushed beneath the weight of public ridicule. So side by side with the "*winking Madonnas*," our illustrious unknown adds his "*bleeding Nuns*."

Once more. Suppose that we tell of the wonders, many and continued, which are being worked at St. Winefrid's Well. The hearer has his explanation ready. He descants with a self-satisfied smile on the wonderful effects of imagination. Or he remarks that the spring is chalybeate, and that its medicinal virtue is great. He is right. The medicinal virtue of a spring must be indeed great, when its waters can cure paralysis, internal cancer, can open instantly the eyes of the blind, can enable cripples suddenly to walk, who could not move before ;—great indeed, if a teaspoonful should rescue a child in the agonies of death, and restore it to health. Yet these are some of the cases which I have personally known during the past six or seven years. The evidence for one of these miracles was given on oath by the subject of the cure before one of the Protestant magistrates of the county; and the well, surrounded with crutches suspended by those who have recovered the use of their limbs, is itself a dumb witness to this hour of the power and mercy of our God.

Yet such is the force of prejudice, such the ante-

cedent incredulity of our countrymen, that they will not even take the pains to investigate the truth of these asserted facts. They argue in the shape of some such practical syllogism as this. "If these miracles have really happened, the Catholic Church is the Church of Christ. But I never will believe that Popery is right. Therefore, of course, no such miracle could have taken place." How then can we hope that Englishmen may yet be brought to submit to the sweet yoke of Christ? Ah! my dear brethren, God is stronger than newspapers. Truth, when He wills it, must prevail.

But there is another phase of public opinion in England, which is directly opposed to the spirit of Christian faith. I have already alluded to it in another sermon, but I must speak of it again. I refer to its omnipresent spirit of criticism. Its authorized organs lead the way. They mount up into a sort of Olympus of their own creation, and there summon the whole universe of truth before them. It matters not what the subject may be. Physical science, strategics, diplomacy, history, poetry, moral philosophy, metaphysics, theology,—on each and all they have their say, and pronounce judgment. Nothing is safe, however profound, however sacred. Like the harpies in Virgil, they pounce down upon the spoils, and defile the feast. They are better lawyers than the judges, profounder men of science than all the royal societies and institutes put together, abler diplomatists than the most grey-headed veterans in or out of office. In the science of war they confound the greatest captains of the

age. They instruct the Pope how to govern the Church ; and act the schoolmaster over the senators of our Legislature. Perfect encyclopedias of wisdom, they look down on the world at their feet, and distribute their praise and blame with an amusing self-consciousness. God and His religion are not exempted from their great tribunal. They criticize revelation, they criticize the Vicar of Christ, they criticize Bishops, they criticize doctrines, rites, ceremonies, vestments. They criticize each Christian communion in turn. And—what is more ominous still—with the exception of the Catholic Church, the rest seem to submit with docility to their more than Episcopal supervision, and court their favourable verdict. It is only a short while since that we saw a distressing instance of this ; when a laboured defence of two Sacraments of the Church was submitted to the editor of one of our leading journals, and appeared in the midst of all the secular gossip which constitutes a newspaper.

And this spirit, developed in the press, percolates among the masses. Everybody has got his off-hand judgment about everything, no matter how intricate or abstruse may be the subject. Cobblers turn statesmen, and tradesmen or mechanics develope into ripe theologians. Two deadly evils result from this miserable epidemic. The wholesome spirit of reverence is utterly destroyed. There is no worship of genius, of learning, or of sanctity. Each man is his own god ; and there is no heaven higher than his own house. He never looks upward to learn and love ; but he gets upon his three-legged stool, and looks

down to teach, expound, and despise. How is it possible that God's Majesty should escape? How can man adore God and himself at the same time? How can he maintain to the death the right of private judgment in all matters as well sacred as profane, and at the same time yield his reason with childlike simplicity to the authority of God's teaching? How can he at once criticize all theology, and believe mysteries?

But there is a second evil—worse if possible than the first—which results from this spirit of criticism. It engenders a really Satanic self-sufficiency. The tempter has come once more coiled up under the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and offers of its fruits to the passers-by, saying to them, "Eat. Ye shall be as gods." And they do eat; and they really think that they are as gods. Of the knowledge of evil they have acquired much; their knowledge of good is infinitesimal. And so with their scraps of science, and scraps of history, and scraps of literature, and scraps of popular pietism,—with their wallet filled with useless news, and records of crime, and dangerous novels, and frivolous magazines—they strut about on God's earth, and hold up their head on high, and discourse on politics and theology; and yet, the veriest mendicants of our so-called modern civilization, beg everywhere for admiration and regard. Drest up in this invincible self-conceit, they look upon themselves as the prophets of a new era. They regard the great sages of the past as mere children; while they themselves have risen as giants for the service of a younger day. They are preachers of a

new gospel, masters of a new philosophy, authors of a new policy, poets of a new Iliad. They never dream it possible that they may be mistaken. They reject the infallibility of the Pope; and dress themselves up in an infallibility of their own, by way of substitute. They issue their decrees and rules; and enshrine the mediocrity of a shallow criticism over the high altar of their deformed Pantheon. What a sorry spectacle is this in good sooth, my brethren! Tell such as these of a creed, they laugh you to scorn. Tell them of the supreme right of the Creator, they will tell you that God is the spirit of the universe; and that they are its latest and most perfect development. Tell them of God's good providence; they will peremptorily inform you that nature works out its own life and progress, and that they can subdue nature. Tell them of Sacraments and grace, and sin and hell, they will confront you with railroads, and telegraphs, and international exhibitions, and the march of science, and the literature of the age. Talk to them of the next world, they will talk to you of this; and extolling the age, will extol themselves. How then can such as they receive the gift of faith? They are eaten up with pride; whereas faith finds no home save with the humble. Yet faith is the beginning of life in the soul of man.

To conclude. If there be one thing more than another which is characteristic of the three wise men of the East, it is their singleness of purpose. And if we, my brethren, would hope either to receive, or, if received, to preserve, the gift of faith, we must be

single-minded too. I mean that we must set the eye of our soul on one object, and on one object only. That object is to find Christ. The Magi cared nothing for difficulties. They were ready at once to give up family comforts, home, riches, position, friends, reputation. They consented without dismay to begin life again, though already grown-up men. They willingly reconciled themselves to the certainty of being called fools and fanatics by their prudent acquaintances. They looked to one thing, and to one thing only; and that was, to go and adore the true Saviour of the world. Simplicity is a rare gift, conceded to comparatively few; single-mindedness is necessary for us all.

I firmly believe, devout brethren—nay, in part, I may say I know—that there are very many still lingering among the religious communions which are external to the Church, who are convinced that the Catholic religion is the only true one; and yet there they quietly remain, just where they were before. There may be not a few among you who now listen to me, who are confessedly in this category. If so, why is this? Why do you allow yourselves to remain in a position in which, because of your bad faith, your salvation is a simple impossibility? Permit me to answer the question. It is because you want this singleness of purpose. You are afraid that your profession, business, prospects in life generally, will suffer, and that your family will be reduced to straitened circumstances; or that your friends will turn their backs on you; or that you will have to suffer petty social

persecutions, ridicule, and contempt. These things have happened very often before;—nay, I am free to confess that they happen as a general rule. So they may, and probably will, happen in your case. Converts to the Catholic Church have for the most part to suffer in one or other, sometimes in each one of these ways. Nor is this all. They have often to suffer, not from those only whom they leave, but from those whose fellowship they seek. God wills it so. But the real question is, whether these sorrows are not a very small price to pay for the acquisition of Jesus and Mary and of Their love, and for securing your eternal salvation? *Id enim quod in præsentī est momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostræ, supra modum in sublimitate æternæ gloriæ pondus operatur in nobis* —“For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.”* Life is short. So are life’s troubles. But the bliss of the beatific vision is eternal. Why should you tremble at sight of the Cross, when it is Christ Who, out of love for you, wills to put it on your shoulders, in order that you may be made more like Himself. But I have something more to say about it. I believe that God accepts these holocausts with peculiar satisfaction; and values them so much, that to the patient endurance of these sufferings by converts,—and in some cases they have been terrible indeed,—we probably owe in great measure the graces, which our good God is now pouring down in such abundance on our dear fatherland.

* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

But you too, my Catholic brethren, may take a lesson from these Magi. We all of us need more singleness of purpose. We must not be afraid of the true principles of our religion, simply because public opinion does not like their savour. Now, if ever, is the time when it behoves us to speak out openly before our fellow-men,—affectionately withal, winningly, but with honest frankness. We, too, must not fear consequences. We are, all of us, elected by God to be apostles, each in his own way. We are all bound to do our best to gain souls to God. And this we can only do by the fearless maintenance of our faith,—the faith once delivered to the Saints. It behoves us to show our love for the Catholic Church, for the Holy Father, Christ's Vicar, for our Bishops, our Creed, our Sacraments, our Saints, and among these most of all for the Blessed and Immaculate Mother of God. Men are getting to be more and more curious about us and our doings. They have ceased to think that we carry a cloven foot. They are ready to give us a hearing. They are learning to be generous towards us. They have hitherto been taught to look upon us as designing, and underhanded, and given to concealment. They will be the more surprised and pleased to find us open and unreserved. They may not at once admit our principles, but they will admire our honesty. Political Protestantism is more than half dead. It were almost true to say that it is in its last agony. What is pious and religious in Protestantism is ready to go to Jesus, and only wants to be put on the road. It is getting frightened, as well it may, at the growth of infidelity and scepticism

in its midst. A deluge is pouring in upon the earth, which is hemming these outcasts in on all sides. They are like that poor hare whose fate was witnessed by so many of you in the late floods. The waters advance round about them. The resting-place for their feet becomes narrower each moment. In their terror our neighbours begin to seek some ark of refuge. It is for you to help them. But you cannot do this, unless you have singleness of purpose. The star of Bethlehem shines not over the Palatine, or Herod's palace. It guides not through streets and marts of commerce. It beckons us into solitude of thought and desire. It leads us on, it is true, to a long and painful journey; but it brings us at last to the Christmas cradle. Let our faith be pure and immoveable, our prayers earnest and habitual, our words outspoken and resolute, our actions the reflex of our creed. Then may we hope to become ourselves a star leading others to that Saviour, Whom we know; and many, by means of our efforts, shall be led successfully to Jesus and Mary.

SERMON VI.

THE CHRISTMAS CRADLE THE REFUGE OF KINGS AND PEOPLES.

PSALM lxxi. 10, 11.

Reges Tharsis et insule munera offerent; Reges Arabum et Saba dona adducent. Et adorabunt Eum omnes Reges terre; omnes gentes servient Ei.

The Kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents; the Kings of the Arabians and Saba shall bring gifts. And all Kings of the earth shall adore Him; all nations shall serve Him.

THE relations of the Church to the State have been the chief battle-field of that all but perpetual war which the world,—fulfilling its own miserable destiny,—has waged against the Kingdom of Christ. It has seemed preposterous to its great rulers, who from age to age have excluded the principles of faith from the region of diplomacy, that the divine Hierarchy should claim any authority or guardianship over Kings and Princes and commonwealths, or should presume to legislate on matters which can come even indirectly within the cognizance of the temporal power. They have ever been forward, consequently, to denounce what they are pleased to call the tyranny and usurpation of Popes, the ambition of Prelates, and the disaffection of Priests, just as the Jews accused Jesus.

of sedition, rebellion, and disaffection to the existing Government of Cæsar, because He announced Himself a King. Thus there have never been wanting men in every age, dearly beloved brethren, who have been jealous in some such way of the peaceful power of the Catholic Church, and of a political influence which is everywhere life-giving in proportion as it is left, without let or hindrance, to do its own special and divine work. But in this country in particular, where deep-rooted prejudices against everything Catholic have been sedulously sown among the many, during the lapse of three weary centuries, by the interested efforts of the few, till they have almost acquired the weight of a respectable tradition, this feeling is more deep, more intense, more universal. What else could account for that general, and, I must be allowed to add, irrational indignation which aroused all classes in this country, when the Vicar of Christ established a settled Hierarchy in our midst? The tranquil current of events has, it is true, calmed men's anger and their fears. Most of them see now, we may presume, how groundless was the agitation. They surely must begin to perceive that spiritual government is one thing, temporal government another; and they are learning to be ashamed of a bigotry, which deceived them into an exhibition of such unseemly weakness. Yet the very causelessness of the agitation lends an additional weight to the fact itself. For it witnesses to the strength of the impression of which I speak.

These considerations, my brethren, have guided me in the selection of my subject for this evening.

I would fain do my best to arm you against another enemy of God, which lurks in the tone and philosophy of modern public opinion. And that enemy is Erastianism. It is for this reason that, once again anticipating the great Festival of next Sunday, I invite you to the Christmas cradle, and ask you to assist in pious contemplation at the first audience which the King of Kings gave to the Kings of the Gentile world. I think that we shall learn there, please God, much which the teaching of Holy Scripture will confirm, and the very nature of the Church of Christ will go far to establish. I necessarily treat the subject theologically. This temple of God is too sacred a place to admit of the intrusion of mere worldly politics. Nor, indeed, do they form part of my philosophy. I speak as a Priest. And my principles are taken, not from the opinions of the hour, which have not yet endured the test of a century; but from the words of the living God, which have held the human family together for eighteen hundred years.

The three Kings of Arabia enter the forlorn-looking stable, over which shone the star—their supernatural guide. And what is it that meets their eye? If they had expected outward insignia of royalty, they are disappointed. There is no purple or gold there, no crown or sceptre, no body-guard, no sentinels to keep watch before the door, no glittering reception-hall. All that their eyes can see is an Infant in rough swaddling-clothes, lying in the arms of His Mother. Yet no sooner do these Monarchs of the earth come into the presence of

that Child than they bend the knee before Him in adoration, pay tribute, and swear fealty. They acknowledge that they hold their kingdom in fief; and that there is a King above them, Whose subjects they are. They acknowledge that this new-born Child is Monarch of a universal Empire; and that the great ones of this world are equally subject to its rule with the meanest of their dependents. How can this seeming anomaly be explained? My brethren, it is very easy. Their whole journey was an act of faith. Faith, as we have seen, was the star of the east that led them to Bethlehem. And faith saw a divine and more real royalty in the destitution of the stable, than in all the splendour of Herod's palace. Riches and pomp would have been simply out of place there—a difficulty in the way. Faith knows that Christ's Kingdom is a Kingdom of truth; and truth is not wont to walk the earth in the livery of the devil. But if you want to see how worldly and political craft regarded this loyalty, you must go elsewhere. You must consult Herod and his intriguing courtiers. They saw in this assumption of rule by one of the children of Judah a fact of deep political significance, full of danger. Such an idea was likely to spread, and to excite the religious fanaticism of the lower orders. It might foster a rival to Herod's claims, excite the alarm of the central Government in Rome, and consequently cost Herod his throne. *Omnis qui se regem facit, contradicit Cæsari*—"Whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cesar."* It was the old cry. So

* St. John xix. 12.

Herod and his Ministers matured their plans. That part of Judea round about Bethlehem was put under a sort of martial law, and the military operations were energetic. There was a frightful massacre of infants. *Vox in Rama audita est, ploratus et ululatus multus*—"A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning: Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."* It was of course the necessary sternness of State policy. Herod rejoices in the certain success of his well-contrived plan; and—the Divine Child lives on in spite of all. Nor was this the last time that such conspiracy has been formed against the Anointed of Lord, and with like results.

You see then that the faith of the Magi looked at Christ's royalty in one way; the statesmanship of Herod and his Ministers looked at it in another. The question is, Which was right? Or, to apply it more germanely to the train of thought which I am pursuing, how are we to regard the Church of Christ? With the eyes of the wise men, or with those of Herod? The world would of course answer in favour of Herod. I will be bold enough to take my stand beside the Magi. And I proceed to give you some of my reasons.

Though it may appear to be old-fashioned and out of date to do so in an enlightened age, which is pulling the Bible to pieces like everything else, and making no more of it than of Herodotus, Livy, or Froissart, I nevertheless prefer to retain the prejudices in which I have been brought up; and shall conse-

* St. Matt. ii. 18.

quently go to the sacred and inspired Scriptures to see which side they take; whether they attribute a royalty to the Catholic Church, and of what sort; whether they seem to subordinate the Church to the State, or, on the contrary, the State to the Church.

Now the first thing that I notice in them is that they constantly describe the Church to be a real Kingdom; not *of* the world, it is true—because this world did not make her, nor can it unmake her—but *in* the world. And when I say a real Kingdom, I mean a body politic, visibly constituted with a supreme earthly Head, with a political organization, with laws and an executive of its own. This is plain from two facts. The one is that Christ, in the Old Testament, is constantly spoken of in prophecy as destined to occupy the throne of David. Now, however we may be inclined to spiritualize such expressions, still, after all, there would be no reason why our Lord should not be represented as Successor of Moses, or Samuel, or Elias, if He were only to be the Prophet of a new religion, and not the King of a new commonwealth. The other fact is that Daniel* speaks of the Church as destined to be the fifth and last Empire, succeeding to the Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman Empires. The very collocation shows that if these latter were really empires, as undoubtedly they were, so also must the Church of Christ be. For she is represented as the fifth of a series. She is necessarily, therefore, in the same order as the others.

If we turn to the New Testament, we find that

* Dan. vii. 27.

our Blessed Lord is perpetually speaking of the Church as His Kingdom ;—the Kingdom of Heaven ;—and of Himself as its King. He openly acknowledged before Pilate, when He was accused of being seditious, and dangerous to the civil Government by reason of this very claim, that He was a King.* And He is of a truth the King of the Church. We Catholics own no other. It is true that, during His visible absence from this world, He has appointed the Pope to be the earthly Head of His Church, with plenary power and jurisdiction. Yet, nevertheless, the Pope is only the Vicar of Christ. He claims no spiritual kingship.

But if I look again into the Sacred Records I find that this Kingdom of Christ is represented as a universal Empire, which in some sense was destined to absorb all earthly kingdoms into itself; and to which the Kings and Princes of the earth were to submit themselves. This is not obscurely hinted at in the well-known prophecy of Jacob: *Non auferetur sceptrum de Juda, et dux de femore ejus, donec veniat Qui mittendus est; et Ipse erit expectatio gentium*—“The sceptre shall not be taken from Judah, nor a ruler from his thigh, till Shiloh come; and He shall be the expectation of the nations.”† We find the same idea carried on in the prophecy of Balaam: *Orietur Stella ex Jacob, et consurget virga de Israel, et percutiet duces Moab, vastabitque omnes filios Seth*—“A Star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Judah, and shall strike the chiefs of Moab, and shall waste all the children of Seth.”‡ In the

* St. John xviii. 37. † Gen. xlix. 10. ‡ Num. xxiv. 17.

Second Psalm the Eternal Father is represented as thus addressing His Son, the King appointed over Sion : *Postula a Me, et dabo Tibi gentes hæreditatem Tuam, et possessionem Tuam terminos terræ. Reges cos in virga ferrea, et tanquam vas figuli confringes cos*—"Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, and shalt break them in pieces like a potter's vessel."* On the other hand, God is represented as laughing to scorn the conspiracies of Kings and Princes against His Kingdom, whom He thus addresses at the close : "And now, O ye Kings, understand ; receive instruction, ye that judge the earth. Serve ye the Lord with fear. . . Embrace discipline, lest at any time the Lord be angry, and you perish from the just way."† Isaias, the evangelical Prophet, addressing the Church, says : *Ambulabunt gentes in lumine Tuo, et reges in splendore ortus Tui*—"The Gentiles shall walk in Thy light, and Kings in the brightness of Thy rising."‡ And again : *Ædificabunt filii peregrinorum muros Tuos, et reges eorum ministrabunt Tibi*—"The children of strangers shall build up Thy walls, and their Kings shall minister to Thee."§ And again : *Gens et regnum quod non servierit Tibi, peribit. . . Sugesc lac gentium, et mamilla regum lactaberis*—"The nation and the kingdom that will not serve Thee, shall perish. . . Thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles, and Thou shalt be nursed with the breast

* Ps. ii. 8, 9.

† Ps. ii. 10—12.

‡ Isa. lx. 3.

§ Isa. lx. 10.

of Kings.”* And again: *Semen Tuum gentes hereditabit, et civitates desertas inhabitabit*—“Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and shall inhabit the desolate cities.”† Once more: *Et erunt reges nutritii Tui et reginæ nutrices Tuæ, vultu in terram demisso adorabunt Te, et pulverem pedum Tuorum lingent*—“And Kings shall be Thy nursing fathers, and Queens Thy nurses; they shall worship Thee with their face towards the earth, and they shall lick up the dust of Thy feet.”‡ Daniel speaks yet more expressly—“In the days of those kingdoms the God of Heaven will set up a Kingdom that shall never be destroyed; and His Kingdom shall not be delivered up to another people; and it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms; and itself shall stand for ever.”§ And once more the same Prophet says: *Regnum autem, et potestas, et magnitudo regni, quæ est subter omne cælum, detur populo sanctorum Altissimi: Cujus regnum, regnum sempiternum est, et omnes reges servient Ei, et obedient*—“And that the Kingdom and power and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven may be given to the people of the Saints of the Most High: Whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all Kings shall serve Him and shall obey Him.”||

Now I do not think that there can be any doubt about the teaching of all these passages of Holy Scripture. They declare, as plainly as words can declare, that the Catholic Church of Jesus Christ should claim, by virtue of a divine appointment, and

* Isa. lx. 12, 16. † Isa. liv. 3. ‡ Isa. xlix. 23.

§ Dan ii. 44. || Dan. vii. 27.

should acquire, a universal empire over the whole world;—that to her should be given a supreme power over all the nations of the earth;—that no kingdom should prosper in the long run which opposed itself to her;—that Kings and Princes should bow down to the ground before her, and should lick the dust of her feet. According to their authority, she is the divinely-constituted Queen of all Governments and peoples and nations, and God has decreed that by her the whole earth shall be led into the light of truth. She is destined to remain to the end; for her Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, which shall never be moved. “No weapon that is formed against her shall prosper.”* On the contrary, *Qui ceciderit super lapidem istum, confringetur; super quem vero ceciderit, conteret eum*—“Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.”† For it is that stone “cut out of the mountain without hands;”‡—fashioned, not by man nor by the will of man, but by the power of God. Such was to be the Church of Christ according to the voice of inspiration.

But it may be said—“Your Scriptural argument proves nothing, because it proves too much. For, according to your statement and the literal meaning of these passages, the Church was destined to swallow up into herself all other kingdoms, and to reign on the earth in her own solitary supremacy. But this is refuted by the whole history of Europe for the last eighteen hundred years; and its accomplishment is as destitute of probability now as it has been from

* Isa. liv. 17.

† St. Matt. xxi. 44.

‡ Dan. ii. 45.

the beginning. Besides this, nothing could be well imagined more disastrous to the great interests of the world than that the Church should occupy herself with commerce, navigation, penal laws, strategics, and matters of police, which she would nevertheless be compelled to do under such circumstances." Now though I might easily and with justice contend that the result would not be so calamitous as is imagined, but that, on the contrary, greater and more stable happiness would probably accrue to the people from such arrangement, yet I am free to own that it would not contribute to the well-being of the Church. Moreover, I should still have to answer the objection founded on the facts of history. My reply, therefore, will be of quite another kind.

I say, then, that as yet we have considered the picture of the Church as given us by Holy Scripture only on one side. It remains for us to look at it from another point of view. Christ has said most emphatically: *Regnum Meum non est de hoc mundo*—"My Kingdom is not of this world."* It is really and truly a Kingdom. Nay, what is more, it may necessarily have to rule with temporal sovereignty in its divinely-constituted centre during the greater part of its history. But spite of all this, its end, object, corporate constitution, powers, policy, government, are not those of a merely earthly kingdom. They are supernatural, eternal, divine. The Church concerns herself with the souls, not with the temporal interests, of men, save so far forth as she is asked to do so, or as these indirectly flow from the moral

* St. John xviii. 36.

and spiritual peace and progress of a people. And, within this her own peculiar sphere, Kings and Princes and Potentates must obey her orders just as unreservedly as the meanest of their subjects. She does not pretend to concern herself with commerce, markets, exchange, railroads, war, police, penal laws; except when these involve other moral and religious interests far more momentous, and which come under her especial cognizance. No. She rules over consciences. She guards the immutable principles of right, justice, purity, charity, the worship of God, the eternal salvation of man. She leaves purely earthly matters to earthly kingdoms; and does not think of interfering, unless these should entrench upon those unchanging laws of which she is the guardian and judge. There is, therefore, room enough for both. The civil and ecclesiastical power have each its own sphere of duty. Nevertheless, it is of the highest necessity that the civil power should be subservient to the Church as regards the first principles which direct its action. This it must needs be for the sake of God's glory, for the sake of Christ's supreme authority, for the sake of true peace, true prosperity, and the ultimate happiness of the governed. Natural philosophy itself plainly teaches that a power which rules over the heart, conscience, soul, and internal life of man, must be the ultimate refuge and director of a power which can only pretend to direct the outward action and external life. That Government which guides man on with an infallible authority to his end,—to his final perfection,—must give law to a Government which,

because of its weakness, can only at the very best concern itself with the means towards that end. The sanctification of the soul, and the eternal beatitude of Heaven,—these are the end of man. And the State by itself knows nothing about them ; so that when it presumes to meddle with them, it at once presents a chaos. Let it, then, concern itself with riches, political economy, taxes, police, international policy, health-bills, and the like, as much as it pleases. But let it leave to God's Church the promulgation of divine truth, the administration of the divine law, the regulation of divine worship, the education of the people, the care of the poor, sick, wounded, prisoners, orphans, sinners. *Reddite quæ sunt Cæsaris Cæsari, et quæ sunt Dei, Deo*—"Render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*

But here again you may urge a fresh difficulty. Some one in effect may be inclined to address me after this manner. "Your statement and your proofs are very plausible ; it might almost be said convincing. It is all well enough in theory. It is a heavenly picture, representing the State as working with the Church and under her direction for the happiness, truly so called, of the whole human family. It is indeed beautifully painted ; but then we know that artists are in the habit of drawing largely on their imagination. The real difficulty begins, when you attempt to put this theory to its practical proof. For the action of man is so complex, it presents so many different phases, that it may

* St. Matt. xxii. 21.

constantly happen that the Church will consider an act in one light, and legislate accordingly; while the State will consider the same act in another light, and by its legislation put itself in opposition to the Church's voice. Thereupon succeeds on the instant a collision of interests, and a sort of civil war. Nor can it be said that such conflict would be of rare occurrence. On the contrary, it would be constant. For every human action has its theological and moral bearings on the one hand, and its political on the other. You cannot eliminate either the one or the other. Take, for instance, so common an occurrence as marriage. The Church declares marriage to be a Sacrament, and in consequence prescribes laws of her own which affect its validity. The State treats it as a mere civil contract; and claims therefore to take the question of its validity under its own special protection. Yet upon the issue of this conflict depend the legitimacy of children and questions of property, which may affect the position of whole families for generations. How can these divergent claims and interests be reconciled?"

Now, my first answer to this objection is, that it does me—it does Holy Scripture—an injustice. It takes only half the idea, and destroys by dividing it. It assumes throughout the existence of two authorities, independent of each other, equal, both supreme, only in different spheres. I say that this is impossible; and am willing to own that it would give rise to all the difficulties which have been so clearly depicted. The difficulties of Piedmont, in

consequence of this untenable attitude which it has assumed towards the Church, are a striking and living example. But I have already pointed out that God has given supremacy to the Church alone ; and consequently that wherever and whenever the principles of the Church are affected, the State must necessarily give way, if it would answer to the end for which it has been constituted. Its laws, its government, its policy, its wars, its commerce and trade, are only legitimate so far as they do not clash with the teaching of Christ and of His Church. Wherever they do so clash, the State must—if it would be Christian, if it would live in the light of God's favour—lick the dust before the feet of its divinely-appointed Queen. The captain of a ship does not ordinarily unfurl or furl the sails himself, stand at the helm, or run aloft up the shrouds. He leaves this to others. But he directs, orders, forbids. And the sailors must needs obey his voice. If they should resist, it would soon result in an inevitable shipwreck.

However, I feel that I have given an answer which—though satisfactory and cogent enough so far as it goes—leaves nevertheless much to be said ; much that is necessary to be said, if we would hope to uproot those prejudices which modern opinion has nurtured against the supremacy of the Church. I purpose therefore to develope what I mean at greater length ; and for this purpose will lead you back once more to the stable of Bethlehem. Three Kings of Arabia come on the first Feast of the Epiphany to find a shelter, a harbour of refuge,

in the Christmas cradle. And for safety's sake they lay up there, they consign into the hands of Jesus, the King of Kings, three different orders of gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Now, I remark that we have still the cradle of Jesus in our midst. It is the Catholic Church. I remark further, that these three Kings are the appointed patterns of a Christian King and of a Christian State. A truly Christian State, therefore, will seek its refuge and security in the authority of the Church. And to this end it will willingly give up to the Church's care, as its offering of homage and fealty, its gold, frankincense, myrrh. I will proceed to explain my meaning.

When the Magi offered their gold to Christ, they acknowledged Him, not only as their King, but also as their God. They acknowledged themselves to be but the stewards; God, the supreme Proprietor of this world's riches. They owned that their money, and the money of their people, must be used according to God's will and in His service. Now here is a matter in which those Kings were a pattern to a Christian State in its relation to the Church. And that I may express all I mean, I shall—while referring particularly to money—at the same time extend my meaning to all those gifts of God, whether personal or corporate, which a State and the citizens of a State, have received from Him. I say then that all such gifts may be regarded, so to say *materially*, as means, *i.e.*, towards the attainment of some temporal good. They may likewise be considered *morally*, as they affect the great questions

of human right and justice. They may lastly be considered *theologically*, *i.e.*, in direct relation to God and the Christian law. If we desire to preserve the right order, it is evident that the theological bearing of such gifts must govern the moral and material. For God is Author of all law, natural as well as positive; seeing that the natural law is as it were an echo of the harmony of His own infinite Perfections. But positive law is the perfection of the natural, is founded on it, and, when Divine, gives an infallible certainty to our knowledge of both. Let then the State legislate concerning money, and other goods, according to their material relations. But the Church, or rather the Holy Spirit in and by the Church, must needs supply it with the first principles on which such legislation should be based. She must practically have the right of veto. It is she who has to defend God's rights over man. Hence,—to speak particularly about money,—all legislation concerning trade, commerce, accommodation-bills, exchange, and the rest, ought never to contravene, or even forget, the sacred principles of justice, as enunciated by the authority of the Church. This is of all necessity, if the State wishes to secure its well-being and stability. It does not follow, because a certain course of legislation has enriched the public exchequer, has given a new impetus to trade, has developed commerce, has promoted what are called business habits and an eager hunger after wealth and comfort, that for these reasons alone, such legislation is good. On the contrary, as the tendency of a like impetus is to increase enormously all sorts of sins against

justice, unless more than ordinary safeguards and preventive restrictions accompany such measures, they are a simple curse, not a blessing. What profiteth it, that a nation is rich and nursed in comforts and luxury—that trade is free—revenues large—ships sailing over every sea, and bringing home delicacies from every port—that merchant-princes accumulate large fortunes,—if a whole people is eaten up with sins of usury, of fraud, of mad speculation; if adulteration of food is the rule, not the exception; if avarice, that lowest, most repulsive, and most degrading of moral diseases, has eaten into the very vitals of the population; if truth, goodness, and the beautiful in art, are forgotten, sacrificed to a mad greed for gold? Such a nation may be rich, and increased in goods, and its people may be, to use a euphemism of the hour, saving and thrifty; but in God's sight it presents one vast hideous ulcer. By all means, then, let a Christian nation, if it will, develop its resources to the full. The temporal and material well-being of a State is not to be despised or neglected. This is one of the special objects of all civil government. But remember well at the same time, that such development must be made quite subsidiary to higher interests and nobler ends. It must grow up beneath the shadow of the eternal laws of right and justice. And that it may do so, the State must acknowledge in this respect a due subjection to the Church. Oh! if only England had not thrown off this sweet yoke from its neck, from what evils, now rampant in its midst, might it not have been preserved! To make of the Christian

Priesthood a sort of moral police, which receives its inspiration and guiding principles from civil authority, is to put the cart before the horse, and to make time the measure of eternity. Justice, fettered by so monstrous a deordination, will inevitably succumb to expediency; and the highest principles of morality will be sacrificed to self-interest.

I will illustrate my position from another sphere of thought and action. It is a notorious fact, confirmed by the history of eighteen centuries, that the Catholic Church has contentedly subsisted under every form of Government. And it is equally notorious that she has ever exhibited towards one and all indifferently a prompt and willing obedience in things temporal. She allows to each people or nation full liberty to choose for itself the particular form of political institution which it prefers. If her counsel is asked, she is ready to give it; but she is equally ready to keep silence, when that counsel is not asked. She knows and teaches that "every soul must be subject to higher powers; for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation."* She is, therefore, quite content to offer a hearty allegiance to the most absolute form of democracy as to the most absolute form of monarchy, in all things which do not interfere with God's law and God's rights. But then she has her solemn duty to perform as supreme judge in ethical and theological truth. Extend the

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

franchise as much as you please, she interferes not. She is quite indifferent. A duly-constituted Legislature has a perfect right to undo its own work, and to reform past imperfections, or to satisfy present needs. But once propagate the doctrine, that in such a question the citizen has only rights and privileges to seek—put out of sight, or even out of their due prominence, his increased duties and responsibilities before God—unchain the bond which fastens earthly government to the foot of God's throne by seeking for the ultimate source of authority from below, not from above—transform the ruled into ruled and the ruled into rulers—she does and will interfere. You have trespassed on her own proper ground. You have perpetrated a great transgression. You become propagandists of a false, unchristian, anarchical philosophy. You are doing your best to smother the voice of God's truth in the human heart. You are practically displacing God from His temple, and instituting a new worship of reason. The Church must, unless she would abdicate her supremacy as Queen of the nations, utter her protest against your atheistic tendencies.

Once more. The duty of educating the people is one, not only of political justice, but of Christian obligation. The State owes it to its subjects that they should be educated; for God has up to a certain point confided to it the solemn charge of caring for the people's education, and of promoting it to the best of its power. The Church, therefore, not only looks on contentedly, when human government busies itself within its own province about the education of

the masses, but she does her utmost to secure success to such efforts. For the Church is bound by a much more stringent obligation to look to it. But the duties of the Church and of the State respectively in this matter are quite distinct, and definitely marked off from each other in the purposes of God. The State is bound to look after the material part of education, and to minister to the Church in her training of its youth. But it is the Church which must be the schoolmaster. God Himself has expressly commissioned her, in the person of her visible Head, to feed His lambs!* It is the Church's province to pronounce what are the true principles of education. Human authority, Houses of Parliament, statesmen, cannot answer such a question. Much less can public opinion answer it. It has tried to do so in our day; and it has made the most portentous and fatal mistakes. It has unconsciously adopted the false philosophy of the old serpent, when from his hiding-place beneath the tree of knowledge he cried out to the passers-by, "Take, eat; ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." And the consequence is that education, truly so called, has not gone forward. It has gone backward. To educate man in the proper sense of the term, you must develope all his faculties—intellect, will, imagination, passions—in their respective mutual subordination and constituted unity, towards the end for which he was created. But who can with authority pronounce what that end is, and how it is to be attained—who can supply the helps necessary to make the effort—save the

* St. John xxi. 15, 16.

Church? She alone is the sanctuary of Divine truth for the intellect. She alone has a power that can bend the human will, and subjugate the passions of our fallen nature. Modern statesmanship has presumptuously stepped into her place. What is the result? The present tells you in part; but the future will, I fear, give an answer yet more terribly convincing. The training of youth is the future history of the world; the lessons of the boy are the actions of the man. The men of this generation have emancipated their schools from the supernatural guardianship and strength of the Church; they have already enslaved the future. They have given their heirs, the promise of their country, no God but public opinion. They have willed to wrench them, if possible, from the Christmas cradle. They have torn down the Crucifix from the class-room. Marvel not, therefore, when such things take place in Catholic States, if revolution and brute force are becoming the normal arbiters of the destinies of Europe. Marvel not, if the present is without hope, and the horizon of the future is becoming darker and more ominous of storm and tempest with each revolving year. Governments have refused to offer their gold to the Babe of Bethlehem, and it has cankered. And the canker of it shall eat into their flesh like fire.

But again. The wise men of Arabia presented their frankincense to the Babe of Bethlehem. Such is an offering which man has in all ages given to God. For it is in itself the symbol of worship. And here again the Kings are a pattern to Christian

Kings and Governments. The true worship of God is a matter which belongs exclusively to the Catholic Church. She has been appointed to that office. It is to her alone that the Divine Providence has revealed His will. The holy Sacrifice of the New Law, the constitution and perpetuation of the Priesthood, the number and nature of the Sacraments, the institution and use of sacramentals, the appointment and revision of ritual, all questions about vestment, rite, and ceremony, the beatification and canonization of Saints, the arrangement of fast and festival,—all these are in the Church's custody, and are exclusively committed to her governance. The State may establish the Church, and give her its aid and civil sanction or not, just as it pleases. But it becomes simply ridiculous when it intrudes itself into things sacred. Nothing can well be a more monstrous anomaly—nothing tends more effectually to give the lie to the first principles of a visible Church of Jesus Christ—than for the State, whether by Act of Parliament or by decision of Privy Council, or by imperial rescript, to prescribe prayers, fashion rubrics, reform and re-reform liturgies, or to cut out the due shape of sacred vestments. But in this country the State has not been contented with legislating on such things as these; it has also undertaken to determine practically the substance of the Christian creed. It is true that there is in this particular instance a plausible excuse. For the State only claims to exercise its rights over a religious body of its own creation. But this does not interfere with the fact that such an assumption claims to deal with the Christian creed, maimed, it is true,

and deformed, yet still retaining some part of the divine revelation. And the principle of which I speak, essentially wrong in itself, though accidentally excusable in its exceptional application, becomes a law informing popular thought and attacking the prerogative of God. Newspapers are thereby elevated to the power and dignity of Popes; and parish meetings or Exeter Hall, to the authority of an Œcumenical Council. Faith and worship are withdrawn from the supervision of the Holy Spirit ever present in the Church, and transferred to the tender mercies of public opinion. Religion, stripped of its objective immobility and supernatural origin, becomes a mere development of the devotional instincts of human reason. However true therefore it may be that Erastianism, in presence of a false religion, is a stern necessity; before the Christmas cradle it is nothing but a sacrilegious excess of human pride, utterly ruinous to true progress and the civilization of the world.

But the necessity and benefit of this concession to the authority of the Church will be more clearly illustrated by an example. For principles are for the most part better understood when they are presented in the concrete. And I shall choose, for my example, the very subject-matter which has given rise to the strongest objection against the doctrine which I have been enunciating. It is sufficiently evident, I presume, to every one who reflects on these questions at all, that Sacraments are an essential part of what in a wider sense may be called the worship of the Christian Church. Yet there is one of them

according to the Catholic creed, wherein—as I have had occasion to remark before—civil interests are peculiarly affected. I allude of course to the Sacrament of Marriage. For marriage is not only a Sacrament, it is also a civil contract. And the gravest issues depend upon the validity of that contract; such as legitimacy of birth, entailed property, titles of nobility, and family union. Here then we have one of those debateable lands where the State and the Church may appear as rival claimants. In such case one must give way, unless we wish to perpetuate a war between religion and society. The question is, which of the two is to yield. The example of the three Kings, as well as the dictates of reason, concur in showing that the State must yield to the authority of the Church. For a power, which can only pretend to touch the overt act, can never hope to compete in the long run with an authority that governs the consciences of men. The State, therefore, if it is wise, will leave the determination of the validity of marriage to the Church. Yet see what has happened in this country, and, sad to say, in the countries calling themselves Catholic. God and His Church have made the marriage bond indissoluble. Recent legislation has made marriage dissoluble on proof of adultery; notwithstanding that those solemn words of Christ are still on record, *Quod Deus conjunxit, homo non separet*—"What God hath joined, let no man put asunder."* Men think that they have settled the matter by an Act of Parliament; but alas! they have only introduced the most

* St. Matt. xix. 6.

dangerous confusion. In the judgment of God and of the Catholic Church they have simply legalized adultery. We will suppose the case of such a subject marrying again on the strength of his supposed liberty. He is afterwards led to doubt of the morality of the step. No sooner does his conscience awaken to the fact, than he must act on his conviction. He must forsake the sin, or he cannot hope for salvation. The pretended contract, however legal it may be and acknowledged by public opinion, must be dissolved. The parties to it must henceforth live separate. Whether this conviction arise from conversion to the Catholic Church or from impartial inquiry, if the man is honest, the result must be the same. What life-long misery must inevitably ensue! How unnatural the position into which rash legislation has brought these two persons by meddling with what did not belong to it! Consider the number of these so-called divorces and the new unions which have resulted from them, and then conceive, if you can, the innumerable difficulties which this unwarrantable intrusion on the Church's jurisdiction has engendered. I say nothing of the multitude of fresh sins to which it has given birth, by which the just anger of God is being more and more excited against us; nor of the rude shock given to that spirit of the family, which had been heretofore the salt which has preserved this people from utter corruption. But I cannot conclude this subject without calling your attention to one startling and principal thought. If ever this great nation should return to the faith of its forefathers (which I cannot

regard in the light of a distant probability), what a perplexing work is in store for the Church in order to undo this daily increasing world of mischief.

Once more. The three Kings offered of their myrrh to the Christmas cradle. Myrrh is the known symbol of sorrow and affliction. And I understand, by this their present, that they offered to the Church all the pains, troubles, and calamities which oppressed their subjects. It is as though they had said in the person of all earthly government, "Behold the sick, the wounded, prisoners, condemned criminals, slaves, foundlings, the poor, the deaf, dumb, blind, the orphans and widows, and the sinners: we offer up all these to the care of the Catholic Church of Jesus Christ. Let her take them to herself as her special heritage. She knows how to deal with them. She alone has that mysterious grace within her, which can make life not only tolerable, but happy, for such as these. The State cannot legislate for pain and misfortune. Law cannot cure the diseases of heart and conscience. Police and hired nurses are not on the whole successful physicians. We give up then all these children of sorrow to the keeping of holy Church." And who, that knows anything of ecclesiastical history, shall venture to say that the Church has not nobly executed this solemn trust? Of a truth what St. Matthew has recorded of Jesus her Divine Head, may be without fear applied to her. *Et circuibat Jesus totam Galilæam . . . sanans omnem languorem et omnem infirmitatem in populo. Et obtulerunt Ei omnes male habentes, variis languoribus et tormentis comprehensos, et qui dæmonia habebant,*

et lunaticos, et paralyticos; et curavit eos. For the Church since her birthday on the first Christian Feast of Pentecost "has gone round about all lands, healing every sickness and every kind of infirmity among the people. And they have brought to her all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and such as were pursued by devils, and lunatics, and the paralytic, and she has healed them."* As time went on and the Church developed in numbers and strength, successive Orders arose within her bosom, whose self-chosen life it was to devote themselves for Christ Jesus' sake to now one, now another form, of human woe. Multitudes of Christians are made slaves by the infidel. The evil presses itself upon the notice of the Church; and straightway a Religious Confraternity arises, which devotes itself to the one object of obtaining their redemption. The sick and wounded are seen gathered together into hospitals. Those hospitals at once become manned with Religious of both sexes, who offer their unpaid services for the solace of the suffering members of Christ's mystical Body. Nor is this ancient charity of the Church yet dead within her. On the contrary, never has it shown itself more ardent and all-embracing than now in these latter days. Time would fail me were I to attempt a description of all the marvels effected by one French Saint of the seventeenth century—the illustrious St. Vincent of Paul. There was hardly a species of human misery for which he did not, by his own superhuman efforts, make some sort of satisfactory

* St. Matt. iv. 23, 24.

provision. And his work, which began in France, ended not there and then. For it had an immortality and Catholicity about it, which signifies to all of what Church it is the legitimate fruit. Yes, it is carried on still to this hour, no longer in France alone, but in all the quarters of the habitable globe. And this spirit of love is even in our own day breaking out into fresh life. Since the commencement of the present century, numerous Congregations of Religious men and women have arisen to meet the ever-increasing needs and woes of human life. And now in England, there is scarcely a town of any importance where our Nuns have not spread to be mothers to the orphan, instructors to the young, nurses to the sick, consolers of the dying, medicine and hope to those of their sex who had once sold themselves to sin, but were seeking the feet of Jesus. This is indeed the Church's special province. It is here that, like Christ her Spouse, she finds herself at home. Yet strange to say, the world is jealous of allowing the Church free ingress even within these her chosen sanctuaries. And while in one country St. Vincent's work among the poor has been stopped by imperial edict, here in this country it has not unfrequently happened that the doors of jail, hospital, and poor-house, have been ruthlessly closed against both Priest and Nun. You will not let them do what you cannot do yourselves. You must surely ere now have learnt by long experience that the subscription-list and committee-room, and hired nursing of a natural philanthropy are but sorry substitutes for the personal self-denial, and long-suffering perse-

verance of Catholic charity. Why then do you not unite with the Magi in offering your myrrh to the Christmas cradle?

What I have said of misfortune in general, I have a special right to say of the sufferings of the poor in particular. Three centuries ago Protestant England took the care of the poor out of the hands of the Church, and tried to do her work by means of legislative enactment. Statesmen have tried to make the best of it from time to time; for they had the wisdom to perceive that what had been as yet attempted was a miserable failure. They have often had the best intentions; and have brought to bear on the question efforts the most earnest and the maturest political sagacity. Yet they have done but little good; for the poor of Christ have not been intrusted to their guardianship. And accordingly what a sad testimony against a Christian people is the actual state of our workhouses, as they are most significantly called! Who could venture to assert that these cold, dismal places of confinement, with all their mechanical supervision, are a fitting residence for the special representatives of our dear Redeemer? Ah! time was when the monastery and convent took charge of the poor; and they were happy then. The covetous avarice of a tyrant destroyed their cherished asylum. Unprotected, thrown upon the tender mercies of a selfish world, their claims forced themselves upon the Government, now alarmed for public security. Law took the difficulty in hand. And we are able to judge of the result.

But there is one other misery of life, which is

worse than all the rest. It is a disease the most difficult of cure. It is so hidden that no natural remedy can reach it. It burrows in the human heart, and unseen communicates itself from soul to soul. Its ravages destroy oftentimes the life of a whole people, spreading everywhere among the young, captivating the strong and vigorous. It tears up family love by the roots, and shakes a commonwealth to its foundation. That disease is sin. Law cannot reach it. No vote of Parliament or Chamber can check its secret progress. No sanitary cautions of unaided human wisdom can circumscribe its action. There is one power, and one power only, which can hope to master it. And that power is the grace of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of Penance. And that grace is to be found within the sanctuary of the Catholic Church alone. Ah! if you would only allow the maimed and diseased with sin to be brought to these healing waters of the evangelical Bethesda—if you would put no let or hindrance in their way by law, or custom, or the prejudices of public opinion—what a stirring of the waters by the Angel of the Lord! What innumerable cures! How soon would the hateful curse diminish, and a new moral life circulate among your more than heathen masses! Yet now, alas! your method is precisely the reverse of this. All the fine writing of the newspapers, the eloquence of pulpit and platform oratory, the warnings of parental solicitude, the denunciations of popular speakers, the plausible misstatements of novelists, the bitter falsehood of calumny, are employed to excite a groundless horror of the con-

fessional in the minds and hearts of our dear fellow-countrymen. If only, my Protestant hearers, you could understand and realize the new life, new hope, new light, which are obtained there; the incalculable service done to the State, to the family, to the souls of hundreds of thousands! But no! you will not offer this myrrh to the Christian cradle.

My dearly beloved brethren in Jesus Christ, I have done but scanty justice to my theme. It was impossible for me, within the limits of a single sermon, to attempt more than to touch upon a few points, which might be suggestive of others. All I have hoped to do was to expose some reasons for my belief that the Catholic Church is, as Holy Scripture teaches, the only refuge of Governments and States in their difficulties. This is indeed my deep conviction, nay, an article of faith for me. Would to God that I could lead the peoples of the earth to embrace a like conclusion. For if ever there were a time when this truth was practically important to a Christian commonwealth, I believe that it is the present. Even the prophets of our generation have not hesitated to express their ominous fears of the future. They acknowledge that the vessel of the State in all countries has broken from its old moorings. Political uneasiness is universal; and there exists no longer a common principle of union. Meanwhile, a dark spirit of democracy and license has come forth from the abyss, and is ready in an expedient hour to let slip its dogs of war and revolution. We have not yet seen the end. Who can find his way out of the general confusion? What shall

Kings and Princes do, when thrones are tottering and crowns are changing hands? Where is the final rallying-point? My brethren, I see a throne in the south, whither the eyes of men are anxiously turning. It is the throne of an Apostle of Jesus, solitary in its dignity. It is visibly weak, invisibly strong. Raised high above the flowing tide of time and the sordid interests of earth, it is there that truth and justice find their last refuge. "Understand, O ye Kings, receive instruction, you that judge the earth."* Distracted with international disputes and menaces of war, seek there a common arbitrator of your differences. Weak before the secret confederacies of hell, seek there your strength. Ye Christian kingdoms, undermined by false philosophies and false religions, seek there a true philosophy, seek there a true theology. Torn in pieces as you are by contending sects, seek there a heavenly unity. Pressed down to the earth by a gross and sordid materialism, seek there the high principles of faith, hope, and love. Methinks I foresee a deluge which is about to overwhelm the earth, and cover the tops of the mountains. The great fountains of the deep are being broken up. No solid ground shall there be for the soles of the feet. The heavens shall be dark with thunder-cloud; and the destruction shall be great. But over the upheaving water rides at ease the Ark. And all who have sought an asylum there shall be saved alive. For inside it is the heavenly Dove with the olive-branch in its mouth. "The Lord hath chosen Sion; He hath chosen it for His

* Psalm ii. 10.

dwelling.”* “Our feet were standing in thy courts,
O Jerusalem. Jerusalem, which is built as a city,
which is compact together. . . Let peace be in thy
strength, and abundance in thy towers. For the sake
of my brethren and of my neighbours, I spoke peace
of thee.”†

* Psalm cxxxi. 13.

† Psalm cxxi. 2, 3, 7, 8.

G O D

THE TRUE, THE GOOD, THE BEAUTIFUL.

SERMON I.

GOD THE TRUTH.

ECCLUS. i. 1.

Omnis sapientia a Domino Deo est, et cum Illo semper fuit, et est ante ævum.

All wisdom is from the Lord God, and hath been with Him alway, and is before all time.

I SHOULD be loth to deny that knowledge, within a certain limited range and in lower spheres of thought, has increased, or at all events spread, during what the world's prophets call this age of civilization and enlightenment. Nevertheless, I am much more sure that wisdom has proportionably decreased. It is true that the press teems with books great and small; but they are, for the most part, like the ephemeral insects that buzz about the window-pane in summer. They are born, and perish in a day. Philosophies, so called, present themselves in scarcely interrupted succession. But the theories of one year die in the next; and are, each in turn, laid out for internal dissection. We have now almost as many discrepant systems as there are professors; and they ordinarily live the term of their author's professorship, then expire and are buried out of sight. At the best

they drag out a few more years of decrepitude by the unwise fanaticism of a small coterie of narrow-minded disciples, who try their little best to stay the mortification which has set in. The simple fact is, that truth does not grow with all this mass of printing. It cannot breathe; it is stifled under the heap. And wisdom cannot be, where truth is not.

If you should ask me the reason of all this, I answer as follows. Wisdom, if we consider it *objectively*, is the supreme science. It not only contains the principles of all the other sciences, but it co-ordinates, subordinates, directs, rules them; and reduces the cycle of sciences and disciplines to one harmonious whole. There is a vast and multiform hierarchy of truths; and it is wisdom that arranges them in their proper order. God is the one foundation of truth in all. His truth, which is Himself, is over all, through all, the end of all. Therefore it is that theology, which is the science of God, is wisdom.

Towards God centre, from Him diverge, in Him live all the rays of truth of whatsoever kind. To blot out, therefore, the idea of God from your scientific investigations, is to study colours in absolute darkness. You cannot be sure of your own thought, if God be not in it, as partial Cause and ultimate fulfilment. He is the one only Bridge which unites the subjective and the objective—the thought and its object. Modern philosophy has set Him aside. It relegates Him to the feelings and sentiments; but it will not endure Him as the Truth. It excludes Him from the sphere of science. Theology has been

scouted, long ago, as mere dogmatism, a war of words, subtle hair-splitting. Supernatural theology—the science of God based on Revelation—has been denounced as an invention of the Schoolmen, which has darkened knowledge. And what has been the result so far? The Bridge, of which I just spoke, has been broken down. And English thought halts on one bank, systematizing its materialism, debasing science to the level of physical induction, and trusting to nothing beyond the grasp of the arm, or the horizon of the eye. On the other bank lingers German idealism, either busied in the evolution of what it calls the *ego*, or in the multiform transformation of the *non-ego*,—creating everything out of nothing, or nothing out of everything, to its own complete satisfaction,—hanging up its intellectual cobwebs on the branch of every tree, till a rude wind comes and blows into threads the geometrical playthings of ill-used leisure. The one transmutes logical forms into external realities, for want of something better to fill up the vacuum; the other, adapting itself to the practical temper of the English mind, gropes about, like a mole, amidst God's visible creation, robbing nature of its voice and man of his prerogative; making of accident a law, and of necessity a god. My brethren, such is the product of our modern illuminism;—this Gnosticism of our great age of progress. And, if there were not—as, thank God, there is—a Catholic Church, to save human thought spite of itself, we should soon sink into an ecumenical scepticism. Truth would be for us a mere name. But when truth leaves us, unity

must go too ; and man would relapse, of necessity, into a state of savagedom, clothed in the tinsel finery of a luxurious and barbaric materialism. How near we are to this abyss, let the facts of the day bear witness.

I propose, then, in the present conference to consider God as the one only True, and the one only Wise. I desire, as far as it lies in my power, to restore to modern thought that one master Object, Which can alone reduce it to life and unity.

Truth denotes, as, doubtless, you all full well know, the essential relation of being to intellect. Created being is either measured by, or measures intellect, according to the nature of the particular intellect to which it is referred. All such reality is measured by the mind of God ; but itself measures the intellect of man. In other words, all things are true, so far as they correspond with the Divine Idea ; while human thought is only true, so far as it answers to the objects of its contemplation. The former is what has been called *ontological*, the latter shall receive the name of *conceptual* truth. It is my purpose to speak only of the former to-day. I shall reserve the consideration of the latter for next Sunday.

I spoke, just now, *exclusively* of created being as being measured by the Divine, and becoming in turn the measure of the created intellect ; and I had a purpose in such exclusion. For though uncreated Being is supreme measure of the created intellect, it can hardly be said with strict propriety to be measured by the uncreated. And the reason is, that

nothing can properly speaking be said to be its own measure. Yet in God, Being and intellect are inexpressibly one. But it does not follow from this that His own infinitely perfect Being is not the object of His intelligence. On the contrary, it is the one, sole object of His immutable and eternal intuition. For He sees all truths, even contingent truths, past, present, and future, in Himself. And it is to this object of the Divine mind that I now wish to invite your attention. True it is that the task is venturesome. Yet it is of greatest profit. We shall find ourselves in a fathomless ocean of light. The more we go on, the greater is the mystery. Thought fails;—imagination fails;—words fail. We catch faint glimpses, and we are dazzled. Still, in the midst of this weakness, we learn more than is embodied in all the wisdom of the world.

God then, devout brethren, contemplates Himself from the beginning of that past eternity, which has no beginning and no past; though it is past to us. That one most ineffably simple act goes on, as we should say, through all the countless ages yet to come; as it abides, changeless, in the present. And in this one, infinite Idea, the subject and the object—the Thinker and What is thought of—are identical. God's thought is His essence, and His essence, His thought;—two phases, after our feeble way of understanding, of one objective Reality. If His essence were *in any sort* distinguishable in fact from His intellect, or, again, His intellect from His thought, He would cease to be the infinitely perfect Being that He is. We make the distinction, because

otherwise we could not think about Him at all. We borrow from our ideas of the creature, in order to reach after some faint understanding of our Creator. Nay, there is a foundation for the distinction. But that foundation is to be found, not in any composition even metaphysical in God,—it is a contradiction in terms,—but in the supercelestial fulness of His simplicity. And that one Idea is all that God is; for His wisdom is really His whole being. That one, immutable Idea is one eternal act, which is God. He is not, as we poor creatures of a day, at one time thinking, at another distracted; or now thinking of one thing, now of another. He never ceases to think; and that idea is His life; and His life is Himself. Hence our Blessed Lord says of Himself, *Ego sum Veritas*—"I am the Truth."* It is not enough to say that He is *true*. He is *the Truth*. His essence is a boundless sea of Being. In one sense there is no being outside Him. For He contains all being either formally, or virtually, or eminently in Himself. And this illimitable Ocean of Being is uncreated Light. *Quoniam Deus lux est; et tenebræ in eo non sunt ullæ*—"For God is Light; and in Him is no darkness at all."† If there were darkness, there would be error. And over that unruffled sea of limitless light His infinite intellect is unchangingly fixed; reflecting that light after our way of conceiving, though itself the light. And, as I said before, His thought does not measure His essence, because His essence is His thought. If all the ideas of all the generations of men,—of the

* St. John xiv. 6.

† 1 St. John i. 5.

greatest geniuses that the world has ever seen, or will see,—could be gathered up into one grand focus, such an intellectual act could hardly pierce the surface of that Sea of Light; for the finite can never grasp the infinite. Nay, more; for the same reason, if all the intellects of the Beatified in Heaven, and if the contemplation of the countless hosts of Angelic Intelligences—even augmented by the excelling wisdom of the sweet Queen of Heaven—were collected into one act, strengthened by the light of glory; and this act were added to the former, so that the whole of God's intellectual creation, surmounted and perfected by the human Soul of Jesus, was fixed, as with one eye, in an eternal gaze upon the Divine glory, it could never, throughout the countless ages of eternity, see all that God is. None but God can know God perfectly, so as to comprehend Him. *Forsitan vestigia Dei comprehendes, et usque ad perfectum Omnipotentem reperies? Excelsior cælo est, et quid facies? Profundior inferno, et unde cognosces? Longior terra mensura ejus, et latior mari*—"Peradventure thou wilt comprehend the footsteps of God, and wilt find out the Almighty to perfection? He is higher than Heaven, and what wilt thou do? He is deeper than hell, and how wilt thou know? The measure of Him is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."*

And this essence of God is of infinite simplicity. All the infinite that He has and is, He is wherever He is; and that is, everywhere. The whole inconceivable perfection of God is present within the

* Job xi. 7—9.

smallest mote that dances on a sunbeam, as though He were present nowhere else ; yet He contains all things within Himself ; and, unextended, stretches out infinitely beyond them. He knows no space, yet He fills all space, contains all space, immeasurably surpasses all space. Yet you cannot part or divide Him. He is one indivisible act of Being. Nevertheless, in that superexceeding simplicity there is *to us*, because of our intellectual feebleness, an infinite composition. For He is fulness of Being ; and we take all the forms of created being that we know or can conceive, purify them from imperfection which is not-being, and collect them into one, with the hope of seeing some shadow of His glory. He is Light ; but that light is as yet inaccessible.* He has, however, poured out in abundance over His creation the variegated colour of perfections flowing forth from Himself as their efficient Cause and infinitely consummate Exemplar ; and we paint these colours on a mental photodrome, if so be we may form to ourselves some feeble notion of that light. For all perfection, beyond what human thought can conceive, is in that light ; nay, rather, is that light itself. God is all-wise ;—God, all-powerful ;—God, all-love ;—God, all-merciful ;—God, everywhere present ;—God, all-just, all-holy ;—God, all-beautiful ;—God, self-containing, sufficient to Himself ;—God, eternal, above all accidents of time ;—God, unchanging ;—to sum up all in a word, God, self-existent, infinite essence. He is this ; and infinitely beyond all this. There is no possible

* “Qui . . . lucem inhabitat inaccessibilem ” (1 Tim. vi. 16).

perfection, conceivable or inconceivable, which He is not supereminently. Yet all is He in the inexpressible simplicity of His Divine unity. The head reels, strength grows weak, before the superessential excellence of His glory. We look here, we look there; we look on one side, then on another; everywhere there is light, truth. We try with profound humility and fear to launch out on that sea of Being. There is no shore, no limit. All is light, truth,—light, truth. In it is contained the foundation of all those first principles of metaphysical truth which the old masters called the great dignities of science. They are, so to speak, a partial revelation of Himself, the inexhaustible Truth. And human science builds upon them as upon an eternal and immutable foundation. They are self-evident, because they are full of light. God's light shines in and through them. They are evident *to us*, because the light of their origin pierces the cloud which surrounds the throne of the Everlasting, and shines forth to human contemplation. And they are eternal, unchanging, unaffected by all changes of time, because God is unchanging, and they are an echo of His wisdom. They are founded deep in the bosom of His truth. Man recognizes, may embrace, but cannot change them. He accepts them, because they attract his intellect to the union of assent by the compulsion, as it were, of a magnet. But if he would venture to analyze their light, and to demand a reason for their evidence, he shall be smitten with blindness. *Qui scrutator est Majestatis, opprimetur a gloria*—"He who ventures on a critical and

self-confident examination of the majesty of these canons of God's wisdom, shall be overwhelmed by the glory."* "Hither thou shalt come, and shalt go no further," says the Divine truth, "and here shalt thou break thy swelling waves."† Let the light, child of man, be enough for thee. Seek not to fabricate it in the workshop of thy own frail reason. Be not rash enough to cast heavenly truth into the alembic of thine unwise overcuriousness; otherwise thou shalt become darkness in the folly of thy pride. And, "if the light that is in thee be darkness, the darkness itself how great shall it be?"‡

So, again. There are first principles of ethics, dictates of the natural law, which universally impel the intellect of man to an unhesitating assent. The general conscience of the human family has spontaneously offered fealty to their undisputed royalty over its moral sense. Men may have disputed about their application. They may, in the ignorance of a perverted judgment, have ignored, or even rejected, the latent laws which are germinally contained within them; but they have never, as a rule, attacked the foundations of moral responsibility and moral law, even though they knew not whence they came. These, too, receive their evidence from Him, Who is the infinitely just and holy.

All these great first principles, then, whether in the metaphysical or moral order,—unchanging, eternal,—the foundation of human cognition,—the bulwarks of conceptual certainty,—the sole prerequisites of science,—parents of wisdom, God has

* Prov. xxv. 27. † Job xxxviii. 11. ‡ St. Matt. vi. 23.

seen, known, measured, so to speak, from all eternity. Yet they are not true, because He knows them, wills them to be true. *He* even cannot change them ; for this would be to change Himself. They are partial expressions of His wisdom, which is Himself. And He exists not by the mere permission of His own will, for His will is Himself. He cannot undo the necessity of His own Being, because it is a contradiction in terms. He knows these principles in Himself ; and in like manner as He knows Himself, so He knows them.

And as God knows not only the first principles, but all truths, both in the metaphysical and moral order,—not, so to speak, *directly in themselves*, as though they were measures or determining causes of His knowledge,—but in His own essence, which is all truth ; so must the like be said of those lower forms of truth, which are concerned with created existence, and form the subject-matter of what is called physical science. There was an eternity of the past, during which God reigned alone in His own self-sufficient bliss and glory. Stretch out the eons of time to the utmost limits which the most exacting geologists may require, extend them, if you please, beyond the power of human calculation, still will there remain a preceding eternity, antedating the first morning of creation. And when the time came, which was the beginning of time,—for time is the measure of created life,—He created His universe, according to the eternal counsel of His freewill. And since that first day until now, creation has been ever going on. In regular course, under the direction of

fixed laws imposed from the beginning on the visible universe, there have been development and progress, decay and renovation, death and reproduction, — matter going through cycles of being under the determination of successive forms,—so that the series of natural phenomena reaches to a number beyond the power of human arithmetic. Yet each one of these God knows in its minutest individuality. *Unus ex illis non cadet super terram sine Patre vestro*—"Not a sparrow shall fall on the ground without the knowledge and permission of God, our Father." *Vestri autem capilli capitis omnes numerati sunt*—"All the hairs of our head are numbered by Him."*

Do you ask me how, or in what way, it is that He knows them? I answer that, first of all, He knows the intimate nature, the essence of each and all, in His own architectonic wisdom. For no intelligent being can fashion or make—far less create—by design, unless the thing fashioned should have been first conceived in his own mind. And that conception, so preformed, is the model or exemplar of his work. And by how much the fashioning is more thorough, and deals with more of the essential elements of the object to be produced, by so much must the idea be more comprehensive in its reach. It would require a vastly more intimate knowledge of matter and of its substantial forms to be able to endow it with the accident of electric force, than is required to elicit that force into action in a body where it is already latent. What, then, must not have been the infinite

* St. Matt. x. 29, 30.

perfectness of those Divine conceptions, which were the models of creation, and which embraced not only the accidental and substantial forms of things, but even the matter out of which they should be formed ; —in a word, all that they have and are ? And these conceptions were, and are, the prototypal ideas ever existing in the wisdom of God ;—the models of His vast design. He knew from all eternity most intimately, and after what measures and in what orders His handiwork should, in its multiform parts, imitate the perfection of His own Being. Each creature He conceived as imitating that perfection in a certain definite grade, and no further ; and that *no further* constitutes each creature's limit and imperfection. Thus, in an infinitely perfect way, does our great God know all creatures past, present, and future, in the light of His own superessential wisdom.

But I own that I have by no means as yet solved the question which I proposed. For the precognition of the essences of things, even if you add thereto the precognition of their individual accidents, in the prototypal ideas of which they are the copy, cannot explain the Divine knowledge of the *existence* of each created being, whether at the beginning of time or in any particular moment of its course. There is a succession of created existences. One exists during such an epoch ; another, during some other epoch of time. And in those prototypal ideas of which I have spoken, there is no foundation for the conception of actual existence, or of temporal order. There is something wanting ; and the deficiency is supplied

by the action of the Divine will. Again must I remind you, dear brethren, that I speak after the manner of men. For in God all is one, because of His infinite and incomprehensible simplicity. Yet is there, in that awful simplicity, an unfathomable fulness of power, which poor human reason must distinguish in order to comprehend. With this reserve, therefore, I say that, from all eternity, God decreed in the counsels of His freewill to create or fashion, at such given point of time, each creature which has lived, or is living now, or shall ever live. And in that decree of His omnipotence God sees the existence of each one of His creatures. For the Divine will is not like human will. Much there is which may intervene between the latter and the execution of its purpose. Impediments may arise from without; from opposing and coercing influences, from the restraint of force, or lack of opportunity, or misordination of circumstances. Impediments may arise from within; from mutability of purpose, infirmity in act. But no such impediments are conceivable in God. His will is necessarily its own fulfilment. His *fiat* is accompanied by its corresponding act. For nothing can interpose between the two. Hence, in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, the expression of His will is represented as the law and source of His creation. *Fiat lux; et facta est lux*—"Let light be made; and light was made." *Fiant luminaria in firmamento cæli, . . Et factum est ita*—"Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven, . . And it was so done."* His will

* Gen. i. 3, 14, 15.

is invincible; and, consequently, as He sees the essences and complete natures of things in the prototypal ideas of His wisdom, so does He perceive their existence, and the due time of their production and of each stage of action, development, decay, and dissolution, in the decree of His omnipotent will.

But our great God sees more than all this. For in His own infinite essence He perceives all but infinite orders of possible beings, which only are not, because He has not chosen to create them. He has not put forth all His might, for it is limitless. He has not created the noblest and best; for this would be to set bounds to His power and wisdom. What He has called into existence is but a part, infinitesimally small, of what He might have done, had it so pleased Him. And all that rest He knows, He comprehends. He sees with unerring clearness each distinct degree in which His own infinitely perfect Being can be imitated by unnumbered orders of life. This is their *intrinsic* possibility. And He knows also that His almighty power is sufficient to create them, one and all, if it were His goodwill and pleasure. This forms their *extrinsic* possibility. Thus the whole truth of possibilities is hidden in the deep abyss of His perfection and almightiness. And thus, too, He our good God, knows in Himself not only all the existences, but He knows also in Himself all possible forms of life and being.

But there are other things,—facts, and therefore truths,—which depend on the freewill of the intelligent creature. And these, too, God knows, and knew from all eternity. The sweet Psalmist of Israel extols this

knowledge, where he says, *Domine probasti me, et cognovisti me. Tu cognovisti sessionem meam, et resurrectionem meam. Intellexisti cogitationes meas de longe: semitam meam, et funiculum meum investigasti. Et omnes vias meas prævidisti; quia non est sermo in lingua mea. Ecce, Domine, tu cognovisti omnia, novissima et antiqua*—"Lord, Thou hast proved me, and thoroughly known me. Thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up, all the movements of my life even to the end. Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off in the long past of Thy eternity; my path and my line,* all my conduct and my term of life Thou hast searched into with an infinitely perfect minuteness. And Thou hast seen beforehand all my ways. For there is no speech in my tongue. Behold, O Lord, Thou hast known all things, the latest as well as the most ancient."† A like doctrine is taught us in the Book of Ecclesiasticus: *Cognovit Dominus omnem scientiam, et inspexit in signum ævi, annuntians quæ præterierunt, et quæ superventura sunt, revelans vestigia occultorum. Non præterit illum omnis cogitatus, et non abscondit se ab eo ullus sermo. Magnalia sapientiæ suæ decoravit: qui est ante sæculum et usque in sæculum*—"The Lord knoweth every sort of knowledge, and hath beheld all successions and changes of times. He declareth things past and future, and revealeth the signs whereby things hidden from us may appear. No one single

* Some interpreters understand by *funiculum*, the bed; and understand the Psalmist to mean by *the path*, our active life, by *the bed*, our state of contemplation.

† Psalm cxxxviii. 1—5.

thought escapeth Him, and no word can hide itself from Him. He hath beautified the glorious works of His wisdom, and He is from eternity to eternity.* Thus, then, it is a revealed fact that God has ever known, and still knows every movement, action, thought, movement of the will, wish, of each one of us in an infinitely perfect way. Nothing escapes Him. "For the Lord knoweth all knowledge." And it is philosophically certain that He must thus know from everlasting all the actions of men. For if it were not so, then He would not be omniscient. If it were not so, then His knowledge would be capable of increase; and as His knowledge is His essence, He would be subject to change, and imperfect. Therefore He would not be God, the self-existing, Who can be limited neither by Himself nor another.

Yet there is, at first sight, a difficulty in understanding how God can know these actions of His intelligent creature. For if He knows them, He knows them from all eternity; seeing that He changeth not. But if this be so, then He knew them before the event; He knew them ere ever the men were brought into being, who should elicit them. How, then, could they be free? For if God knows them from all eternity, they must be as He knows them; since He cannot err. How, then, can these actions be free, when from all eternity man is determined to them, and to no other? I answer, with many of the Fathers, that the foreknowledge of God, if we may rightly so name it, is not the cause of our free actions; but our actions—to use the bold words of Eusebius† and of the

* Eccclus. xlii. 19—21. † *De Preparat. Evangel.*, cap. ix.

Pseudo-Athanasius, the author of the sermon "On the Passion and Cross of our Lord" among the works of St. Athanasius—are the cause of the foreknowledge. Not that they are truly a cause. How could they be in their miserable insignificance, a cause of God's knowledge, *i.e.*, of Himself? No; by His own infinitely superperfect Nature, He is determined to the knowledge of every truth in every order. Wherever or whatever truth is, it is represented in the Divine essence as in a mirror. But that it will be a truth, and is now, and ever was a truth to our great God, is owing to the free determination of the created will. If there were never to be in time such an election, it would never be a truth; and, consequently, God would never have known it save as a possibility.

But still the great difficulty remains, that the act of the freewill of the creature is reflected in the Divine essence before, in the measure of time, that act has been elicited, and while, consequently, the will has its full liberty of choice. I, therefore, lay before you another principle of great importance in the consideration of these and similar questions. Time measures the life of created, contingent being. It is, as a German writer has beautifully expressed it, *articulated eternity*. The eternity of God knows no measure. It has no past, no future. It is unarticulated. It is an immutable *now*. When we speak, therefore, of God's foreknowledge, we are using a phrase which is imperfect, and is liable to be misunderstood. We employ the word, because we cannot conceive of realities, except in time. We apply our own measure

to the life of God. But our future is His present. I will try my best to illustrate my meaning.

There is a crowd of men passing in succession along a far-stretching road. That road is divided by a river; but its parts are connected by a bridge thrown over the stream. Many of the travellers have not reached the bridge; a goodly host has passed far beyond it. About half-way, by the roadside there is a lofty hill, and one on its summit. He sees the last and the first; for his glance commands the whole road. The bridge is the present, which divides the past from the future. Neither past nor present sees on to the future; but there is One upon His holy hill Who sees, at a glance, the whole pathway of time. Yet the passengers walk not, because He watches them; rather, because they are walking, He sees them so.

Yet once more. Our good God not only knows all the actions of the created freewill from the beginning of time; He knows much more than this. He has a perfect knowledge of what the freewill of His creature would do under every conceivable circumstance in which that creature *might* be placed, though he never *will* be. The Divine wisdom perceives most clearly and certainly what each one of us would do under every possible hypothesis. A signal instance of this is given in the history of David. He had gone to Ceila, during the reign of Saul, and had delivered that city out of the hands of the Philistines. He was resting there, when it was told him that the King was coming to besiege the town, in order to capture himself and his men of war. Upon

this he consulted the Lord by ephod as to whether, if he should remain, the inhabitants of Ceila would deliver him up into the hands of Saul. And the answer of God was, that they would certainly deliver him up. So David left the town ; and, consequently, the event never took place. Yet the Divine wisdom knew infallibly what the men of Ceila would have determined to do, had the young warrior remained.*

If it should be required of me to explain how it is that God can know the determinations of our freewill which are only conditionally future, but which—as in the instance just given—are never, in fact, verified, I must remind you of the limited range of human reason. It cannot grasp all the fulness of the Infinite, and its ideas about Him are mainly derivative from the creature. Yet an answer to the difficulty can, under such limitation, be given. I cannot for one moment admit with some that such truths are present to the Divine wisdom, because of the intimate knowledge which God has of the nature and disposition of each human will, and, in that knowledge, the knowledge also of the contingent determination of each under every possible combination of circumstances. My reason is that such an answer supposes our free choice to be infallibly determined by external conjuncture ; and in such hypothesis, free choice ceases to be free choice. The great difficulty, however, consists precisely in this, viz., how God can know what the freewill of man would *choose* if placed in certain circumstances, when it will never, as a fact, have occasion to make the election. How can he

* 1 Kings xxiii. 7—14.

know what never is to be? The solution just given may account for conjecture, but not for science. I answer, then, that God is determined to the knowledge of these contingently future acts of the created will, because His infinitely perfect Nature is representative of all truth, and, consequently, of these truths also. For it is true from all eternity that if such a will were placed in such circumstances, it would choose in such a direction, and no other; not because it would be obliged to do so, but simply because, as a fact, it would so choose. It is, therefore, a truth; and, consequently, is represented in the Divine essence, and comprehended therein by the Divine wisdom.

Thus much as regards the infinite embrace of His wisdom. There is no truth, actual or possible, which is not either His essence, or reflected in that sea of light, which is Himself. Not that there is not being, and therefore truth, outside His essence, so to speak; or—it would perhaps be better to say—distinct from His essence. But still that being is eminently there as in its Exemplar, and absolute efficient Cause. And all truth, which depends on the free choice of the creature, is reflected in His ever-present light, and is infolded, so to speak, in the embrace of His eternal omnipresence. Behold, then, Christian brethren, so far as weak human reason can behold, the wisdom of our God. Who can measure its height, and depth, and length, and breadth, save Himself? Who can fathom that fathomless Ocean of Light, save He, Who is fathomless; and Whose infinity therefore can parallel that infinite Abyss of Truth, which is Himself? But now I would, even at the risk of repeating

myself, set before you in due prominence some of the properties, or perfections, of His wisdom and of His truth.

Remark, then first of all, *its sufficiency for itself*. Our poor human reason depends upon the senses for its material of thought. Angelic natures, which are of an incomparably higher and more excellent order than ours, need no such aid. But they understand through ideas which are implanted within them by their great Creator. And the gaze of their intellects is not fixed on themselves only or chiefly. They have a knowledge of the visible creation, which at present we cannot comprehend or realize. But the one, chief source whence they slake their thirst for wisdom, is the great, only, uncreated, substantial Truth. They gaze upon the light of His Divine Majesty, and grow in knowledge. They are wise with His wisdom; clarified in His infinite glory. Not so with our mighty God. Not all the wonders of creation,—not all the subtle laws of natural forces,—not all the harmony of the universe,—not all the accidents or events of created life, can add one jot or tittle to His immutable wisdom, or augment His everlasting truth. If time had never existed,—if as He was from everlasting, so to everlasting He should have remained in the silent solitude of His own perfections, unbroken by the anthems of a creation of His love,—if there had been no human history of six thousand years,—His wisdom and His truth would have been what they are now. They have received not even the smallest addition through a past eternity, which can date back to no beginning. And in the everlasting ages yet to come,

they will be what they have been, immutable, infinitely perfect. He is to Himself all truth. He owes nothing to what is not Himself. Truth and wisdom are His nature, His essence, His life, Himself. He has no object of thought outside Himself. In His incomprehensibly limitless Being, He sees all truth in its minutest details;—necessary truth, contingent truth, —laws, facts, human abstractions and generalizations;—all are reflected in Himself, the one Bible which He reads. And the Bible is the Reader; for both are one. “We shall say much, and yet shall want words; but the sum of our words is, He is all. What shall we be able to do to glorify Him? For the Almighty is above all His works. . . . Glorify the Lord as much as ever you can; for He will yet far exceed, and His magnificence is wonderful. Blessing the Lord, exalt Him as much as you can; for He is above all praise. When you exalt Him, put forth all your strength, and be not weary; for you can never go far enough.”*

Observe, again, a fresh perfection of His wisdom, which consists in *its eternal actuation*. We, poor creatures of the earth, are so constituted, that during more than half the time of our life our intellect is inactive. Little indeed is the time, comparatively speaking, that we can devote to serious thought. Sleep, the necessities of life, mental or nervous exhaustion, and a hundred other incidents of imperfection, interfere with our investigation or contemplation of truth. Then, besides, we can think of but one thing at a time. We cannot grasp even our

* Eccclus. xliii. 29, 30, 32—34.

limited universe of truth with a single intuition. We conceive objects by piecemeal. So, again, we have a memory which retains past ideas, yet how imperfectly. These ideas slumber in the soul; and when the will awakens them, how often are they either dead, or but half alive. We call them; often they will not come forward at our bidding. It is not so with God. His intellect, which is Himself, is one eternal act; and in that one act He sees Himself from everlasting to everlasting in the unchanging *now* of His eternity. And seeing Himself, He sees all things, all truths. Nothing is hidden from His eyes. And that infinite vision of truth is ever before Him. He sleeps not day nor night; for though He knows day and night, day and night come not near the supereminent throne of His glory. That vision was His ever since He has been God, that is, from before all ages; and still He sees it, and ever will He see it through the countless ages yet to come. For time is ours, not His, albeit He knows it. His age is one unchanging *now*. He, therefore, needs not memory, to Whom all truth is immutably present. He has not many thoughts, or many ideas; though, because of our weakness of intellect, we ascribe such to Him. He has one thought, which is His intellect, which is Himself. And in that one ever-present thought He embraces all thought, and all objects of thought, —one incomprehensible fulness of wisdom.

There is another perfection of His wisdom and of His truth, which consists in its supereminently perfect *simplicity*. When we look into ourselves, we perceive diverse faculties, themselves distinguished from the

spiritual substance to which they appertain. There are reason, understanding, memory, the internal senses (faculties absolutely necessary, in our present condition, for the attainment of truth), and over and above these, the soul, which is the spiritual substance from which these powers proceed, and in which they are, so to say, embedded. We have the faculty of reason as well as that of understanding, because there is a vast multitude of truths, implicit to us, which we have need of that faculty to develop, in order that we may explicitly conceive them. Thus we attain to some elements of truth, not without severest labour, by shreds and patches. We manage to scrape together some half-dozen colours of the intellectual spectrum ; who has seen them all ? The mind of man has been working six thousand years. Has it yet perceived one thousandth part of the number of the lines which divide the spectrum ? We are mere beginners. We have not yet mastered the alphabet of truth. But with God it is not so. To Him all the lines and bands, to Him all the colours and the shades of colour were known from everlasting. But He contemplates them not as colours, or as lines, or bands ; though He comprehends all these. His one, eternal contemplation, is resting on light ; and that light, infinitely pregnant, yet infinitely simple, is Himself. His thought is His object ; both perfectly, incomprehensibly one. He has no faculties of sense ; they are imperfection ; He needs them not. He has no faculty of reason ; it is an imperfection ; He needs it not. All truth is explicitly present to His eye. He wants no syllogism to evolve the

unknown. He has no memory. For memory deals with the past ; and He is one, eternal present. It is an imperfection ; He needs it not. He has no soul distinct from its varied faculties ; for He is a Spirit Who is pure act ; and a faculty is an imperfection ; He needs it not. In Him, faculty, substance, act, thought, object, wisdom, truth, are indescribly, ineffably one. My brethren, we can reason out these mysteries. They are the appanage of natural theology. We can in some sense understand them. True ; but we cannot comprehend them.

There is yet another perfection of God's wisdom and of God's truth—*its unchangeableness*. With us, poor fitful creatures that we are, knowledge and wisdom are an accident. We have known by experience, or medical authority has informed us, of a fact which is not of unfrequent occurrence. A man of learning or general information has been suddenly prostrated by a sharp attack of illness ; say of typhus fever. He rises from his bed of sickness, and finds, to his dismay, that all his former knowledge is irrevocably gone. The languages that he formerly knew, he knows no longer. His historical or philosophical researches are now, as though he had never made them. He has to begin afresh, and learn his lessons like a schoolboy. Then again, how often have we made the complaint ourselves, or heard others make it, that as a man labours to acquire a new language, those which he knew before grow more and more indistinct. So, in like manner, when the body is out of sorts, or we are subject to more than ordinary intellectual pressure, how hard it often is to recall to

mind truths which were as familiar to us as the catechism. All these are so many unmistakeable proofs of our impotence and mutability. The wisdom of God is not of this kind. His knowledge is no mere accident ; it is His substance, Himself. It is therefore unchanging. What He knew, He knows ; what He knows, He will know for ever without increase, without diminution. You cannot add to, you cannot detract from, His supereminent wisdom. That wisdom is one infinitely simple, unchanging act, which is Himself, and knows no variations of time ; no past, no future, but one eternal present. There are events which are passing now ; there are events still hidden in the womb of the future. He knew them all from the beginning. He knows them now. His knowledge is like the deep-set mountains. It remains unshaken amid all the vicissitudes of time. Nay, it is more than this. It antedates time in its own unbroken eternity of what we call the past. Strange mystery ! How can we realize one everlasting act of knowledge, which abides, infinitely simple, through eons of time, embracing yet surpassing them ; and which reposes, like an unruffled lake, in the sunshine of that awful, uncreated Present ? Such simplicity ! Such infinite fulness !

There is yet one other perfection of the Divine wisdom, which I would fain chronicle to praise. It is, what I may be allowed to call, its presentiality of vision. We, lowest of creatures in the intellectual order, gain all our knowledge through the senses ; save what we get to know by self-intuition. And, even in this latter case, we see but dimly. We know

of our faculties only in, and through, their acts. What we get to know, with all our labour persistent through a lifetime, is infinitesimally small in comparison with what we do not know. And if we mount higher to the Angelic natures in all their multiplicity of excellence, though it is true that intervention of the senses disappears and the field of vision is indefinitely extended, yet the object of the Angelic thought is given, not essentially possessed. Nor is it infinite, though it is so vast and comprehensive. Angels see and understand what is without them. And if we add that wondrous gift of the beatific vision, which is theirs and will be ours, yet still the object is, so to say, outside them. They now, as we one day, are wise in the immediate presence of God. Should He withdraw Himself, their light would be darkness. But when we gaze upon the wisdom of our God, what fresh abysses of excellence open before us! His truth is His wisdom. For His Being is truth; and His Being is wisdom; so that in Him wisdom and truth are one. The object and the subject are identified. Seeing Himself, He sees all truth; and that sight is Himself. There is no room here for even metaphysical distinction. All distinctions relative to Him are mere accommodations,—logical creations,—cities of refuge for our miserable weakness. Act in Him is Being; light is Being; wisdom is Being; truth is Being; and Being is God; and God is an Ocean of Being. Hence truth is present with an ineffable nearness to His wisdom; because it is His wisdom. He receives nothing from without. He is His own Bible, His own philosophy, His own science. *Scimus quia scis*

omnia, et non opus est tibi ut quis te interroget—"We know that Thou knowest all things, and Thou needest not that any man should ask thee."* But I have spoken already of this admirable perfection of the Divine wisdom. I may safely, therefore, leave it, my brethren, to your own pious contemplation.

But the course of thought leads me upwards to that Mystery of Mysteries, which, Itself incomprehensible, illumines the whole creation with Its unapproachable splendour. *Abyssus abyssum invocatur, in voce cataractarum tuarum*—"Deep calleth unto deep, at the voice of Thy cataracts,"† O my God. From the first beginning of that eternity which owns to no beginning, or,—how shall our frail intellect conceive, express it?—ever since God was God, He contemplates His own superexcellent, superinfinite Being. And contemplating, He conceives it, one simple, everlasting, infinite act. Conceiving, comprehending it, He utters within His own illimitable abyss of essence the Word, which, as poor human philosophy teaches, is the term and complement of the idea. But that Word, that Divine fulness of the Divine idea, is no accident as it is with us, creatures of His hand. It is Substance; It is God. For God's Thought is God; and the Word of the Thought is God. It is everlasting; for God is everlasting. It is self-existent; for God is self-existent. And it is He: It is the only-begotten Son of God;—not begotten after the fashion of human generation, but begotten, so to say, out of the fecundity of the Divine Wisdom. The Conceiver is the Father; the Word conceived is

* St. John xvi. 30.

† Psalm xli. 8.

the Eternal Son. Yet Both are one God. For the Conceiver and the Word are equally the Divine Substance. Yet they are not one in Person ; for there is a true Relation between—may I say it?—the Thinker and the Thought. And though the Relation is in Itself the Divine Being ; yet It is real. And real relation requires a real distinction between Relative and Correlative. And that Word, coequal, coeternal, consubstantial with the Father, is *splendor gloriæ, et figura substantiæ ejus*—“the brightness of His glory, and the express Image of His Person.”* For, as the inner word in man is the representation of the object, so the more complete the idea, the more perfect the representation. But in God, object and subject are one. There is, therefore, a Representation in the Divine Concept, which is not only infinitely perfect, but *substantially* identical with its object. The Word, accordingly, is the express Image of His Father ; for that substantial Concept is infinitely adequate in relation ; identical in substance. He is the Brightness of the Father’s glory ; for He is the infinitely perfect Expression of His Wisdom, which is Light. *Erat lux vera*—the Word “was the true Light.”† For in Him *sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ et scientiæ absconditi*—“are all the treasures of wisdom and science hidden.”‡ In Him is the full expression of the Father’s unfathomable wisdom ; in Him, the understanding in its full complement of the Eternal Trinity ; in Him, the prototypal ideas of the universal creation ; in Him, the laws of nature ; in Him, the facts and incidents of time ; in Him, the vast, outspread realm

* Hebrews i. 3.

† St. John i. 9.

‡ Coloss. ii. 3.

of possibles ; in Him, the truth of the present, the truth of the past, the truth of the future. The Father conceives it all in one simple, eternal, immutable thought. And the Word of that thought, its expression in the voice of the Divine fulness, is the Son. He is the Voice by which the Father Himself, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, hold unbroken colloquy in one substantial Word. That Word is the Voice ; and the Word and the Voice are the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father. So true is this, after our manner of conceiving, that some of the Fathers hesitate not to assert that the Father would be mute, if He could be imagined as not generating the Son. Abyss of mystery ! Well does the Psalmist exclaim in the words, which I have already quoted, that "deep calleth unto deep." Unfathomably deep is the fulness of the Divine Wisdom. Who can measure It ? For where can we place a limit to that Ocean of Light ? Yet how can we comprehend the Illimitable ? But there is another deep, to us yet more incomprehensible, which calleth to that deep, which is depthless, of the Divine wisdom. It is the everlasting, consubstantial Word, the only-begotten of the Father from before all worlds. It is that Divine Generation. It is that effulgent Wisdom, spoken for ever in the Divine Being. That wisdom "is a vapour of the power of God, and a certain pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty God." It is "the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's Majesty, and the image of His goodness." "It is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars ; being compared with the light, It

is found before it."* These words of inspiration are a solace; because they strengthen the human tongue to speak of the Ineffable. This Mystery of Mysteries appals us. The understanding and reason grow giddy. The tongue cleaves to the roof of the mouth. The heart grows faint. The imagination is paralyzed. Humility alone can bear up under the pressure of the wondrous Majesty. We wait for the vision of Heaven. Meanwhile, *Sedenti in throno, et Agno; benedictio, et honor, et gloria, et potestas in sæcula sæculorum*—"To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction and honour and glory and power for ever and ever."†

* Wisdom vii. 25, 26, 29.

† Apoc. v. 13.

SERMON II.

GOD THE NECESSARY FOUNDATION OF PHILOSOPHY.

PROVERBS viii. 12.

Ego, sapientia, habito in consilio; et eruditis intersum cogitationibus.

I, wisdom, dwell in counsel; and am present in learned thoughts.

I POINTED out last Sunday that God is Truth and Wisdom;—all truth, indeed, seeing that no truth is entirely outside Him. For even the several determinations of the freewill of the creature are represented in His essence from all eternity. I now proceed to consider human philosophy and knowledge in its necessary relation to this doctrine.

Man is endowed by nature with a varied order of faculties, each tending towards its proper object. And at the head of this commonwealth of powers, as supreme ruler, sits enthroned the intellect. By it we are chiefly distinguished from the brutes; in it principally we discover that likeness and image of God, so far as our natural constitution is concerned, which distinguished us at our first creation. It is for this reason that the Angel of the Schools places our formal beatitude hereafter in the union of our intellect with the infinite Truth; while he considers the fruition

of the will as forming the mere complement of our bliss. It is plain, therefore, that the cultivation of the intellect, a due acquisition of real knowledge, is a sacred duty. We are bound to do our best, so far as the exigencies of life and the nature of our calling will permit. It is further plain that such work, informed by grace, is full of merit.

Nature teaches us as much. Whence arises that insatiable craving after knowledge of some sort or another, which has distinguished man from the beginning? Whence is it that, while men of various ages and climes have differed in so much, and differ still, and will differ to the end, literature and science, whencesoever they may have arisen, have always had an ecumenical value, having been considered by the great family of nations as common property? In every time a hungry cry for truth has been heard, now more feebly perchance, now again with a more earnest fulness, but never dying out. Surely the voice of nature is the wisdom of God! For what is nature, after all, but God manifest in the ordered laws of His creation? It is plain, then, that true wisdom is the great end for which man was created, and that in the possession of that wisdom he is blessed. Consequently, the great philosopher of antiquity is only expressing a self-evident truth, when he pronounces that the highest and noblest life is the contemplative.

It is no small matter, therefore,—this question, which I am about to treat. If the philosophy of an age goes wrong, everything will go wrong. At first sight you might be inclined, my hearers, to doubt

the assertion. You might imagine that the speculations of any number of philosophers would never go beyond the circle of their respective scholars, or would at the most, tell upon a comparatively small number of the more highly educated. But such a judgment would be erroneous. It does not take into account the unity of social and political life. There is an intimate conjunction of thought and feeling between the various grades of a commonwealth. The few indoctrinate the many. And, in our day particularly, the speculations of the closet are adopted, then propagated, by paper, magazine, review, till they end in giving their own tone to public opinion, and become the practical creed of the masses. Nay—what is more—the predominant ideas of a people, having charged the body politic with their electrical force, pass onward with a strange rapidity to other lands and other races, till they acquire something like a world-wide force. And if this has always been the case, surely now in our time it is specially verified,—now, when facilities of intercommunication have been brought to such comparative perfection.

I unhesitatingly assert that modern philosophy has gone wrong; and has brought the civilized world into a state of dismal confusion and anarchy. Yet, why is it that with such an heir-loom in our possession as the intellectual wealth of all the past ages, we have not mounted a step forward towards the high temple of truth; but, on the contrary, seem to be going backward with each succeeding year? Knowledge, indeed, has multiplied in certain material lines of thought. The laws of nature, and its manifold

phenomena, have been more thoroughly investigated. The mechanical arts, more especially such as conduce to ease and self-indulgence, have developed with a force and suddenness which almost take away one's breath. And yet, if we calmly and impartially look out upon modern thought, as it presents itself before us under every form,—in its daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or more stable expression,—it looks like a Chinese puzzle, all in pieces, and with many of the parts lost altogether. And the parts that remain have been so chipped and broken by unskilful hands, that they will not fit into their places. The first principles of a long and sober-minded past have been exchanged for the showy sophisms of sciolists; terms, which once expressed immutable truths, have lost their meaning; and the very divisions of the old philosophy have been retained, only to become a caricature of what they once denoted. Physical induction, with its patent shortcomings, is adopted as the basis and standard of all science in whatever sphere of truth; and we are, clamorously withal, invited to accept a methodized materialism as the sum and substance of all wisdom. Why is all this? Can we discover a cause?

There are many reasons, some peculiar to ourselves as a nation, some common to all peoples since the religious and social revolution of the sixteenth century. I cannot treat of them all within the limits of a single lecture. One I have already suggested in my last conference. To its consideration I shall limit myself this afternoon. It is the most prominent, the most fundamental. It lies at the root of all the

others ; and it is this. Modern philosophy, so called, has done its utmost to blot God, and the scientific knowledge of God, out of its encyclopedia of science. Our original thinkers have essayed to construct a watch without a main-spring. It has been reserved for the daring originality of modern illuminism to exclude the very idea of God, as an objective reality, from the commonwealth of truths. What is—what must be—the inevitable result ? Why, simple chaos. This I shall endeavour to show at present by setting before you, first of all, the intellectual process, or development, of human knowledge ; and, next in order, by inviting your attention to the existence of a hierarchy of sciences in exact correlation with the order of their respective subject-matters, in order that, in the last place, I may show you how this exclusion of the Supremely One from the inclosure of truth, throws up fresh barricades against our progress at every step ; and effectually interferes with all scientific construction of philosophy in any sphere of objective reality. The conception of God is a necessary foundation of solid philosophy. We cannot get on a step without His conscious presence. God is wanted at every stage of any intellectual process whatsoever. In a word, He is the one, sole Measure of conceptual truth. This is my theme to-day.

I am obliged to submit to your consideration, my hearers, some few preliminary ideas concerning the generation of science in general, and of philosophy in particular, in the intellect of man. For otherwise I could not hope to be able to lead you along with

me in the main progress of my argument. But I will do my best to make these as short and simple as I can. I must premise at the outset that, while I do not wish, on an occasion like the present, to exclude that looser and unphilosophical use of the word science which prevails in this country, I chiefly intend by the word an ordered series of demonstrated truths within the range of a definite subject-matter.

It has been so appointed by the will of the great Creator that man should gain his first impressions of truth from the senses. Under their guidance his intellect contemplates a vast world outside him, and a world in some respects as vast within him. External sense attracts to the consideration of external facts; internal, to the first and more patent facts of consciousness. There both orders *are*; affecting him whether he will or no, and affecting all other men in the same way. To begin with the external world: It has been set before us as God's Bible in the natural order,—to adopt St. Chrysostom's metaphor;—and, as that great Doctor says, there is no one, whether learned or unlearned, whether rich or poor, civilized or barbarian, bondslave or free, who cannot read out of its many pages a vast world of truths. The sensations, movements, impulses, acts of each man's soul are to him another revelation, which teaches much about the existence and nature of spiritual being. Here, then, in the natural order is a great material on which the human intellect has to work. But within their ample limits there is an all but limitless hierarchy of truths, mutually subordinate, severely exact in their relative order, which go up

from earth, like Jacob's ladder, to the throne of God, and unite creation to the One Uncreated. Those truths are there, partially hidden indeed for human labour to discover, but still objectively there. For the eternal word has been poured forth over the whole creation. *Fiat, et factum est.* "Let there be," said God. "He spake the Word, and it was done." From all these created facts, the intellect, through the ministry of the senses, acquires by degrees a vast repository of ideas, which are true in so far as they more or less adequately represent their object. For *ontological* is the measure of *conceptual* truth, *i.e.*, of the truth of human thought. On these ideas the mind, by its reflective power returns, making them in turn its object; and by the aid of analysis and synthesis begins to form judgments concerning external and internal facts. It proceeds also by abstraction and comparison to acquire a treasury of relative or explicit universals; and thence to the evolution of a series of abstract judgments. Thus, to take an instance. From an analysis of the idea of *this man*, it forms the judgment, *This man is rational and animal.* It then compares that concept with the concept of other men, considers what is common to them all, setting aside what is peculiar and individually characteristic, and thus forms the universal ideas, *man*, and *rational animal*, which it synthesizes into a judgment. It may go further, and out of its concrete ideas, elicit corresponding abstractions, and pronounce judgment, as in the given instance, that *humanity is rational animality.* By the same process constantly repeated, it gains in

time an extensive repertory of ideas, ready for use. Again, by the process of what is called induction, it arrives at certain first principles, which are no sooner presented to its view, than it recognizes their eternal necessity and immutability in the bright light of their own evidence. All the implements are now ready for the future construction of science or philosophy. By the faculty of reason, properly so called, the human mind deduces from the self-evident first principles just alluded to a series of demonstrated truths. By such gradual evolution of the explicit from the implicit, it gradually forms in itself scientific knowledge within one or more spheres of objective truth. This truth was there from the beginning in the external or internal facts. For these latter responded to the exemplary ideas in God, and therein is to be found the whole truth of their essential being ; which would remain the same, even should no created intellect exist to contemplate them. *Ontological* truth, therefore, does not grow ; but *conceptual* truth can. For, on the one hand, though existences may multiply, yet their essential nature remains unchanged. It has been settled from everlasting in the archetypal idea. On the other hand, the conception of them in the mind of man can go on, ever increasing, in each individual, and collectively in the human race, through the successive generations of time. For human thought can represent more or less of objective truth ; and can also represent, what it does represent, more or less clearly. When the principal realities, within a certain definite sphere of being, are represented with due certainty and

clearness of demonstration, that is science ; when such representations have embraced the whole of being in its full extension, that is wisdom. But in order that it may be wisdom, the entire commonwealth of truths must be represented as it really is,—in order, distinct place, and mutual relation. The world of being is not a fortuitous concourse of atoms or forces, but a regular government ; and our intuitive or demonstrated concepts must be reduced to a similar unity by method, if we intend them to be true representations of their object. But I shall have to speak of this presently more at large.

Here is the place to make one most important observation. Two faculties of the mind have been principally at work throughout this generation of science ; to wit, the intellect, and what is specially and specifically called the reason. The intellect intuitively perceives the first principles of truth, and the conclusions deduced from them. The reason moves from the one to the other by the power of illation. Its act is mere motion ; and requires, so to say, two points : the one to determine its commencement, the other to appoint its end. This is supplied to it by the intellect. As your movement must begin from a point of rest, so must it, in like manner, terminate ; unless you admit perpetual motion. There must, then, be in like manner a point of intuition whence reasoning begins ; and a point of conditioned intuition, where reasoning ends. In other words, without intuition of first principles and conclusions, all demonstration is impossible ; and, consequently, all science. *

I now hasten on to refer as briefly as I can to my second part. And, though to some among you whose minds are unused to such subjects of thought, what I have to say may not at once be understood, I pray you to believe that it is necessary to introduce these abstract ideas, when dealing with a subject which is becoming each day more and more prominently *the* question of interest with men of culture, and *the* weapon of offence against Catholic, or Christian truth. Protestantism is already intellectually dead. Philosophies, mutually antagonistic,—some materialistic, others idealistic,—are taking its place. In one point alone they would seem to agree—in the exclusion of the idea of God from what they call science. I must, therefore, bring before your notice that which is necessary in order to enable me to draw my conclusions.

I say, then, that the universal voice of mankind is agreed in affirming an order, or regulated series of being, beginning with what is lowest and all but formless, and going on through progressive stages of life up to that which is highest and noblest. I do not care to assert now whether that series culminates in man ; or whether it mounts higher through unnumbered ranks of pure forms, varied in their excellence and converging towards a centre, till it finds its consummation in an infinite Ocean of Being, Which is its Alpha and Omega—its efficient and final Cause. There *is* such a series ; that is enough for me at present. If it be so, there must then be a corresponding hierarchy of sciences ; if, at least, the concept is to be a true representative of its object. I

add that the mind of man naturally begins with the lowest spheres of being, because they are easiest of apprehension ; and then aspires to ascend gradually to the highest. It first, therefore, in the order of cognition, comes across sensible existences, commencing with formless matter, and going up, by regular steps of being, to man considered as a mere physical entity. All these existences, as such, form the subject-matter of purely physical *science*, as it is called. And the nobler the form of life which is the object, the nobler that particular discipline which occupies itself with that object. But, within this sphere of thought, certainty and evidence are of the lowest and least stable kind, because they are only *conditionally* true. All existence, save One, is contingent. It is true that it *is*, because it is ; but it need not be. And its modes, order, laws, are *now* what they are ; but they *might* be quite other than they are without disturbing too much the issues of human thought. Such objects of contemplation give birth in our minds to the wide-spread family of physical disciplines, which are useful and interesting in their way, yet chiefly as finger-posts pointing to something above and beyond themselves. Higher than these are three other disciplines, two of which may safely vindicate to themselves the name of science. Yet it is hard to arrange them in due order ; for what the one lacks by reason of the nature of its subject-matter, it more than compensates by the nobility of its object. The first of these is geometry, which is the science of the laws of space, and consequently does not transcend

material and sensible being. For space is the envelope of external extension. Yet it is truly a science, since it proceeds only by rigid demonstration. The second is arithmetic, which has been described to be the science of time ; yet, as it seems to me, wrongly, for the definition errs by defect. It is not only the science of time ; it is also the science of the co-ordination of wholes. Anyhow, we get beyond matter, and sensible being. For arithmetic finds a work for itself among the choirs of Angels ; and in all forms of supersensual created being it is the intellectual clock, which measures contingent life. The third and last is ethics, which treats of the free actions of man. Its first principles are purely scientific ; but as its one object is truth of duty, not truth in the abstract, its ultimate resolutions are not, for the most part, demonstrations but convictions, though they are built on demonstration. There is one property common to all three. They presuppose existence. It is true that they do not trade upon it, so to speak. The first and second are purely scientific, because formal. The last is scientific in its first principles, because they are the echoes of what is unchanging. But still, if there were no creation, there would be no geometry, no arithmetic, no ethic. All three postulate existence as a substratum ; though geometry and arithmetic wholly, ethic in part, abstract from the existence of their substratum. I must add, for fear of causing confusion, that I accept the term ethics in its generic signification, as including ethics proper, or man in the responsibility of his individual capacity,

economics, or the responsibility of man in his social or domestic relations, and—highest of all—politics, or the responsibility of man in his civic relations. Thence we ascend to a higher and far nobler region. We pass beyond the realm of contingent existence, with all its temporary phenomena, and gaze upon what the philosopher calls the *what was to be* of being ($\tauὸ \tauὶ \tilde{\eta}\nu \epsilonἶναι$)—its correspondence with the exemplar or prototypal ideas, according to which it assumed its specific shape and nature. Time and space are now for us as though they were not. We aspire beyond the actual and momentary, and do our best to realize the whole plan of creation. Pure essence is our one object, and therefore we betake ourselves to the abstract. The nominalism of the age accuses us, in its blindness, of wasting our intellectual energy in the consideration of what it deems to be pure figments of the intellect. It can see,—it can admit nothing but the concrete. It is too short-sighted to see beyond. And it therefore condemns what it cannot understand. But the concrete bears along with it, as its companions, time and space; and our effort is to launch out into the eternal and illimitable. We want a standing-place for our feet. We need the necessary, and eternal, and unchanging, as the foundation and supporting pillars of our temple of truth. We seek; we find. And the science which we acquire by such efforts is metaphysics. Like its object-matter, it is absolute. God Himself cannot change metaphysical truth, because He cannot change, cannot contradict, Himself. Its first principles, its demonstrated con-

clusions, are adamant in their strength, and stand immutable from eternity to eternity. Public opinion, Acts of Parliament, protocols of statesmen, statutes of Universities, the temporary violence of infidel bigotry, cannot touch them. Their foundation is deep-rooted in the eternal hills. They are far above the reach of time, or the mutations of the world and its affairs. They live a never-changing Paradise in the pure regions of eternal truth.

Yet one step further. The highest branch of metaphysic—that science which Aristotle calls *the Queen of sciences, the science of sciences*, in the natural order—is natural theology, or that knowledge of God which can be acquired by pure reason. For in Him what is temporal or contingent disappears. From Him all being flows, towards Him converges, in Him receives its full complement of perfection. The essences of things, as we conceive them, are the dull representatives of the architectonic ideas after whose model He created all that was made. They are His wisdom. They are from Him. Apart from Him they are vain and empty names, without worth, without real meaning. He, and He alone, is their Reality, their Fulness. Consequently, as all the rays of truth; scattered over creation, converge towards and return to God as the sole fountain and perfect completion of their unity and life; so all the sciences in their order and relative subordination centre in theology as their Queen, their foundation, their strength; the one only key to their unity of reduction. Without this science of sciences, which is true wisdom, there is no real commonwealth of

truths. There remains a chaos of disjointed facts,—each class disconnected from, and independent of, its neighbour,—all uncertain, inevident, barren, voiceless, dead,—shreds and patches of a vesture which the folly of human pride has lacerated,—empty shells scattered aimlessly along the shore of time.

Having, then, thus cleared our ground, let us examine more attentively how it is that *conceptual* truth is impossible,—that all acquisition of truth is impossible,—that philosophy is shattered to pieces, not only if we exclude God from the category of objective truth, but if we do not allow theology, or the science which concerns itself with Him, to rule and direct, at least implicitly, the evolution of thought.*

I will begin from the beginning. It is absolutely necessary to the generation of truth in our own minds that we should be able to trust with certainty to the faculties, which we must necessarily employ in the acquisition of all knowledge of whatsoever sort. But what proof can we give to ourselves or others of the infallibility of our understanding, reason, consciousness, senses in their normal activity and in due presence of their object? We cannot find any

* I do not mean to imply that natural theology should interfere with physical science in particular, or the subordinate sciences in general, within their own domain. No sensible mistress of a household would interfere with the operations of her cook in the kitchen. But she orders, and remains above. The cook remains in the kitchen. It would be matter of surprise if the latter were found receiving visitors in the drawing-room. It would be said that she did not know her place. Yet modern experts in physical science do not seem to appreciate the incongruity.

sufficient premisses for a demonstrative conclusion. It is true that we have an invincible *argumentum ad hominem*. We can expose the self-contradiction of the sceptic. The problem *solvitur ambulando*. But is this, of itself, enough? Does it shed any real light on our darkness? May not this self-contradiction be the stern necessity of fate? We are wont to say (when we are questioned), with the wise men of old, that these faculties have been given us by *nature* to enable us to attain to objective truth, each faculty within its own appointed sphere; and we prove, after a manner, their natural destination by their constant, universal, and spontaneous exercise. But what do we mean by nature when we thus argue? By the very phrases we employ we convey the idea of order, adaptation, intention, rule. But order, adaptation, intention, rule, demand as their correlative an Orderer and Ruler, endowed with mind and will. Apart from such relation our words are mere empty sound, signifying nothing. I suppose, therefore, that if we mean anything at all, we mean by nature the one great Author of nature. But if the idea of God is to be excluded from the dictionary of our modern philosophy,—if everything arises from chance or necessity,—or, in the hypothesis of a God, if He is “unknown and unknowable,” to quote the words of more than one modern writer,—where are we at the very outset? There *can* be no order, no purpose, without a provident Intellect and Will. The senses may deceive us, to begin with; and thus the very founts of knowledge to us are stopped up. Self-consciousness may be a dream; and personal

identity its spectre. All certainty of spiritual nature vanishes into thin air. Our understanding is supposed to assent to certain judgments with an immoveable tenacity of adhesion. All this, for what we know, may be a delusion. We reason from point to point ; and logic teaches us concerning a series of forms of thought, which we fondly imagined to be universal and unchanging. How do we know that we are not the victims of a perpetual deceit ? The mind dares not move ; to move is to doubt ; and the very doubt is an act of which we may, in such case, reasonably doubt in turn. Thus man finds himself, without his God, plunged into a dark abyss of scepticism, out of which there is no escape. He cannot move hand or foot, under the penalty of self-contradiction. If he even dares to affirm his scepticism, he gives himself the lie. For he cannot affirm a doubt, nor can he affirm a universal doubt, because then he must in all consistency doubt of his universal doubt, and doubt, too, of the faculties which he has employed in conceiving his doubt. Yet he begins his doubt of necessity with an implicit confidence in those faculties. Thus is man, if he excludes God from his philosophy, reduced to dumbness and intellectual inanition ; he cannot think a thought advisedly without turning traitor to his scepticism.

But if, out of sheer compassion, we pass by this difficulty, which awaits us at the very threshold of thought, new difficulties confront us as we advance. I called your attention, if you remember, to the fact that all reasoning is a process, a motion. It needs a point of departure or commencement. You cannot

go on for ever reasoning backwards. You must needs stop at last. And that first truth which, according to the hypothesis, you cannot reason about,—how do you know it? How are you certain of it? Does some one reply—"By the infallibility of my understanding within the due limits of its exercise?" I ask—"How is that infallibility proved?" If by a syllogism, the question returns as to the certainty of the understanding in its intuition of the premisses; and thus we go round eternally in a vicious circle.

The difficulty, however, is not over yet. We will grant, for the sake of argument, the moral infallibility of the understanding. But I must journey from my premisses to their conclusion. To do this, I must use my reason. I say, indeed, that I evolve the implicit from the explicit. But that is my *ipse dixit*. All depends on the inerrancy of my reason, when left to itself, and in its normal exercise. But that is a mere hypothesis, if we are to exclude all notion of God. How can I prove it? If I could prove it at all,—which I cannot,—it would be by a syllogism. But the objective value of a syllogism, or, in other words, of the process of the faculty of reason, is the very point in question. Here again my efforts are checked, not as regards the subject-matter—for we have not got as far as that yet—but by a practical doubt as to the value of the very faculties of my mind which are brought into exercise.

Let us suppose that these difficulties are overcome; though how they can be set at rest without the idea of God, I know not. Still, we can afford to pass them by. We will imagine, therefore, that these

preliminary obstacles to the acquisition of truth have been removed out of our path. We proceed to the examination of what is lowest, easiest, and least certain within the kingdom of objective truth. Our aim is to be experts in physical knowledge. I am not speaking now of that higher and nobler investigation which, within the sphere of mere physical facts, works out by the aid of mathematics its scientific conclusions. Of that I shall have something to say afterwards. I am now speaking of that would-be philosophy which, by the means of obsolete bones, or retorts, or electrical machines, or galvanic batteries, or anatomical museums—all useful in their way—would construct a new universe of truth on a new basis. For many persons of ability in our day are wont to believe and to preach that in the study of nature we are in presence of what is most certain and most evident. After this, the varied manifestations of life present themselves to our notice. The new philosophy has given us its crude theories concerning this great mystery, and has dignified them with the undeserved title of *science of biology*.

Well, we are now fairly launched on a voyage of discovery and conquest. Abstract truths are sentenced to eternal banishment. The whole universe of truth is to be erected on the foundation of matter. In sensible facts there is certainty, evidence, if anywhere. So the wise men of the day would have us believe. Never was there a greater or more serious mistake. I will say nothing of the difficulties which have been heaped up by the idealistic school against the

reliability of all testimony which is afforded by the senses; though here, to begin with, is, in fact, a startling hitch. For there are much greater difficulties in the way of our acceptance of any testimony which is derived from the senses, than those which are supposed to confront us in the exercise of our other faculties. But I will not press them, for there are many others which will serve my purpose. I will, for the same reason, omit the fact of our imperfect and rudimentary knowledge of corporal substance and its modifications and transformations, which all philosophers alike confess. I will suppose for the moment that the infallibility of our senses and other faculties (for otherwise we cannot argue even inductively), were matter of demonstration. I give my adversary an advantage, but I can afford to be generous. I begin my physical researches, and if God is to be excluded from my study, my difficulty begins at once. I can best illustrate it by an example. It is said of one of our most eminent comparative anatomists that, if you send him a bone even of a fossil animal, extinct for eons of time, he can construct the whole body. Nay, it is added that he not only *can* do so, but that he *has* done it, and that the truth of his construction has been confirmed by subsequent discovery. Now, on what principles would he base his hypothesis? I suppose that he would be guided by the laws of analogy, proportion, and adaptation. Is it on an analysis and careful induction of past and present fact? These, *of themselves*, can never supply a principle of analogy, proportion, adaptation. These

are concepts which essentially connote an intellect ; for they are the expressions, more or less direct, of an intellectual act. They are metaphysically repugnant to what is simply material ; at least if we are to take the dictates of our reason and the common sense of mankind as our guides. The most that you could hope to attain from such facts would be a collection of instances, more or less numerous, in which there was a hap-hazard and undesigned similarity. But with such munition as this you cannot invade the future. There is no reason why an accident, however often repeated before, should repeat itself again. Or, at the most, it is a mere question of a calculation of chances. And would this suffice to satisfy the certainty of physical induction ?

Take another instance. We hear much nowadays of the theory of natural selection. I do not intend to quarrel with it. I have no wish to do so. But I say that if you exclude the idea of God from your physical theory,—if you condemn Him, so far as you have the power, to silence and inaction ;—if He is not ever working in His creation and ceaselessly directing the issues of universal being,—your theory of natural selection is a contradiction in terms. I suppose it may be said, in a rough sort of way, that natural selection consists in the victory of the strongest or noblest in the struggle for life. Now, why does not this take place in inanimate matter ? Why should not clods of earth be perpetually striving to rise to the higher development of the diamond ? Let us suppose the discovery of perpetual motion, for the

sake of the argument; and that a hammer was everlastingly descending upon a huge mass of iron. Would any conceivable mechanical force, continued through as many eons of time as you please, elevate that iron to a higher *specific* nature? Of course not, the physicist would say. But the argument is quite irrelevant; because the theory in question professes to deal only with animate nature. I admit the last statement, but deny the irrelevancy of the argument. For what is that life? According to the old philosophy, life, whether vegetable or animal, consists in certain substantial forms which were evolved from the *potentia* of matter. I purposely exclude in my present argument the human soul, which can only be created, as philosophy teaches us. Of these forms, then, there might be countless thousands latent in the same mass of matter. Why is that *one* form elicited to the exclusion of the rest? Here is natural selection at the outset, though not of the same kind. For the form of a horse is repeatedly giving place to the form of worms. The lower is substituted for the higher. But whence arose that first selection, if so it may be called? Was it the form itself? It was not in actual existence, and could not therefore constitute itself. Could it be the matter? If so, a mere faculty of reception could determine of itself its own actuation; that is, the lower and more imperfect would be creative of the nobler and more perfect. But this is contrary to one of the first principles of philosophy. Modern wisdom, however, rejects this antiquated theory of the constitution of material life. Well, let us call life a force, if you please. Why is that definite

mass of matter possessed of a force which makes it to be a cow rather than a geranium? The same questions return; and the enigma is as insoluble as ever. To take another instance: there is a species of animal which has the external appearance of a leaf, apparently to enable it to avoid the attacks of its enemies. Could the living force of that insect develope or begin to develope itself in such direction unaided? And if it could not begin it in one generation; how could the development be completed in fifty? If it could, why should that particular animal contrive such a metamorphosis; while hundreds of other species have been unable to find out the way? But the fact remains that such animals exist in certain regions. So is it likewise true that there is an orchis which bears a striking resemblance in its flower to a bee. Has that orchis developed into such a form to preserve it from its enemies?

But the adversary is not yet silenced. He replies that the reason why this one living form, or as he would say, vital force, or bundle of vital forces, is in such a body, and that other vital force, or bundle of vital forces, in another, is to be accounted for by the law of generation. Species, we are told by one of the most eminent physicists of the day, are grouped either according to their morphological, or their physiological character. In other words, the classification is made on the basis "of some common peculiarity of form or structure;" or of "some common functional character."* It would appear that

* Huxley's *Lay Sermons*, sec. xii. pp. 283, 284.

the former is to a great extent dependent on the latter. Accordingly, the same great authority declares that "it is the first great law of reproduction, that the offspring tends to resemble its parent or parents, more than anything else." And yet again, "Represent the reason of the law to ourselves by what physical metaphor or analogy we will, however, the great point is to apprehend its existence and the importance of the consequences deducible from it. For things which are like to the same are like to one another, and if, in a great series of generations, every offspring is like its parent, it follows that all the offspring and all the parents must be like one another; and that, given an original parental stock, with the opportunity of undisturbed multiplication, the law in question necessitates the production, in course of time, of an indefinitely large group, the whole of whose members are at once very similar and are blood relations, having descended from the same parents, or pair of parents."* But I pause in pure astonishment. For how in good sooth is the difficulty solved? By simply carrying the question back another step; and by the introduction moreover of ideas and terms which are without significance, or at the best self-contradictory, if there be no supreme Intelligence recognized as unintermittingly presiding over the great workshop of nature. For to tell me that the evolution of vital forces in a definite order and series is the result of "the first great law of reproduction," of itself provokes the further question, And whence this same law of reproduction? Why should not the

* Huxley's *Lay Sermons*, pp. 288, 289.

foal of a mare take to braying, and the egg of a hedge-sparrow evolve a butterfly? If I am told that there are certain ancestral constituents, which passing from the parent to its young, produce morphological or physiological similarity, back comes the question again, And who gave to these essential elements, supposing even their existence and function inductively certain, that order of genesis and constant identity of development? You may run me, at pleasure, through a string of secondary causes; but after all your labour, the old difficulty recurs. You have put off your answer to my *why*; but you have not given it.

But in the very answer itself there is a self-contradiction. For the idea of law, order, series, similarity of form and function, are the idle words of a mere Nominalist, or they speak to me of a supreme Intelligence—supreme at least over the visible and sensible universe. I cannot of course answer for others; but, for myself, I cannot understand a law without a lawgiver,—order, without one to arrange,—a series, without an accountant,—similarity of form and function, without an objective foundation. The ideas demand an intellect as their correlative. Who conceived this objective order, series, similarity? The human intellect is not sufficient for the task. For its own natural order requires an intelligence other than its own, to begin with. Did the mind of man make to itself those necessary logical laws, according to which it must think, if it thinks at all? Did it evolve out of its own consciousness the two orders of intuition and inference? Why does it judge *immediately*

of some truths ; while it seeks out others by a laborious process ? Would it go a roundabout way to work in any case, if it were the sole arbiter of its own acts ? We justly enough condemn such a fancy as preposterous ; but is there less absurdity in advocating the sufficiency of human thought for the creation of physical order, series, similarity ? Has any man yet, in the possession of his senses, ever imagined that either he, or any of his ancestors up to Adam, created the law of universal gravitation ? Has the collective intelligence of the human race established the distinction between a crab and a whale ? If so, let us set to work together, and try to reverse the order.

And, remark it well, that supreme Intelligence is not, cannot be, *unknown*, much less *unknowable*. For if He be the Lawgiver, the Orderer, the supreme Manufacturer of the visible creation,—I say nothing of the invisible,—He must be known in and by His work. To know an effect as effect, is in some measure to know the cause ; for the two are correlatives. And when I recognize in an external fact, or a series of external facts, order, series, similarity of form and function, I *ipso facto*, as I have been endeavouring to show, know these facts as *effects*. In a word, God, His wisdom, truth, goodness, power, are the cornerstone of the whole creation. You cannot do without Him, if you would hope to stir a step in any one of the physical disciplines. You may classify, evolve laws, notify order and similarity ; your whole work is one vast logical inconsequence.

But some one may reply, Your statement, how-

ever plausible, is untrue. For we, *the* philosophers of this modern time, go upon sensible facts; and by patient and accurate induction we have discovered the law. That is enough for us. We do not require a cause, when the law manifests itself so clearly in the midst of these physical phenomena, which are subject to sensible experience. To such I make answer, Have you ever yet known a complete induction in physical knowledge? Have you personally examined every instance of the law, past, present, and future? As regards the past which antedated your own existence you can only exercise an act of human faith; for your only fountain of information is the fallible one of human testimony. As regards the present, your means of observation, having consideration of time and space, are all but infinitesimally small. For the greater part of your facts coeval with your own life you are entirely dependent on the testimony of others. And then, what of the future? You stand alone, unarmed. No personal experience, no witness of a neighbour, can avail here. You are launched out on the unknown, and, if your atheistic principles be true, on the unknowable. You affirm with what is to me a marvellous confidence, that a stone projected from the hand or otherwise will eventually fall to the earth; and *that*, sooner or later, according to the force, greater or less, of its primitive impulsion. How many stones have you thrown yourself? For how many years have you tried the experiment *with critical observation*? Say, twenty years. 'What are twenty years in the midst of six thousand? For all but that twenty you depend on

testimony. Gather together all the authorities you can from literature of all ages and all climes, what a ridiculous foundation for so confident a certainty! But I will let this pass by. Supposing that in all ages of the past down to the present the stone has fallen, why should not a stone, similarly impelled, go upwards for ever to-morrow? You have not yet got even a plank wherewith to bridge the chasm. Will you answer me, that what has continued for so long, will persevere by the law of continuity? What right have you to talk to me about a law? If there be no God knowable and known in His works at least, nature is one vast chapter of accidents. It is a fortuitous concourse of atoms or forces, which you please. It is a wheel of fortune. You have drawn the same ticket ninety-nine times, are you reasonable in your absolute security about the hundredth? Is there any Babbage that exists or has existed, who justifies you in this calculation of chances? But again comes the answer, it is law. What! a law without a lawgiver! Order, without direction! No, my physical friend: if there is no supreme Lawgiver, to talk of a law is a contradiction in terms. If all things occur, energize by a blind necessity, or a yet blinder accident,—if there be nothing real but matter and *fasciculi* of forces, or, as some maintain, these latter only,—there *can* be no constant order; there can be no sufficient reason why the phenomenon of to-day should be repeated on the morrow. All classification into genera and species, orders, kinds, groups, is a pretty toy of human fancy. All the germs of life must be mixed together in one wild chaos; and the

whole confused mass itself be hidden in a more than Egyptian darkness, without a reason to explain why it is there, or what it has to do, or how it must evolve into something which cannot certainly be order. You have excluded order by excluding its Creator and Source.

But it may be said by way of answer in the last resort : It is enough for me that order is there ;—that it has endured the test of long experience. I inquire, On what authority is the existence of such order, and this test of long experience commended to my judgment? It may be said, that the common sense and the common testimony of mankind assure us of this universal reign of law. The answer is suicidal. For the same motives, in a far more eminent degree, persuade me to the conviction that there is a God ;—that He is actively energizing in His creation without intermission of time or omission of place ;—and that His unchangeable truth and omnipotent will are the sole foundation of physical certainty. Yes, there are constant laws in nature. I own it. There are laws of movement, laws of light, laws of developement, collection, reproduction, laws of metamorphosis, laws of accidental change. There may be a law of natural selection ; I see no difficulty in admitting its probability within limits. There may be, and doubtless are, many laws not yet discovered. Electricity, magnetism, galvanism, animal magnetism, may be developments of one force, distinguished in act by constant laws. But all these are, abide, preserve their constant order of succession and collective unity, because there is one supreme Creator and Lawgiver, by Whom

nature is governed and controlled. He is the Alpha of the creature. From Him all things proceed that are ; and by Him they are directed in a marvellous unity of function and evolution to their first issues. He is the Fountain of their life, He is the Governor of their continuance, the Director of their movements. He acts through secondary causes ; but He is Himself the supreme efficient Cause. And He is so intimately in them, though distinct from them, that He is seen, understood in measure, realized through them. They are His garment, concealing, yet announcing the Presence. *Cæli enarrant gloriam Dei ; et opera manuum ejus annuntiat firmamentum. . Dies diei eructat verbum ; et nox nocti indicat scientiam—*“The heavens declare the glory of God ; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth the word ; and night unto night sheweth knowledge.”* And again: *Invisibilia ipsius, a creatura mundi, per ea quæ facta sunt, intellecta, conspiciuntur, sempiterna quoque ejus virtus et divinitas ; ita ut sint inexcusabiles—*“For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, His eternal power also and Divinity ; so that they are inexcusable ;”†—inexcusable, whether with consummate effrontery they deny His existence ; or with an insidious reticence proclaim Him to be the Unknowable and Unknown.

But if we mount higher, and come into the presence of purely speculative truth, the evil becomes more serious and more baneful in proportion to the

* Psalm xviii. 2, 3.

† Rom. i. 20.

dignity of the object. At the same time, it is equally clear and apparent. For the whole of metaphysic is dependent on, or demonstrated from, certain first principles, too simple for proof; yet having within themselves, by virtue of their intrinsic evidence, a power to coerce the intellect to assent, which nothing but madness or the imbecility of a dogged adhesion to preconceived theory can resist.

They are beyond the reach of time, because they mount higher than the changing current of conditioned existence. They are concerned only with the essences of things, and are, therefore, eternal and unchanging. The whole subject-matter of this science of sciences is *essence*. And what do I mean by essence? I will summon to my aid no writer who was written with the light of revelation as a guide to his paths,—no Doctor of the Schools,—no credulous theologian. My authority might be suspected or despised by the wise of this generation. I will answer in the language, already quoted, of the great philosopher of antiquity; and I say that the essence of a thing is what it was to be in the intention of nature, or, as the Christian would say, of nature's God. And the very phrase contains within itself a whole treatise of philosophy. The essences of things are, thus understood, the correspondence of the creature with the prototypal ideas ever living in the wisdom of the great Creator. The architect of the Universe has, in the everlasting present of His eternity, contemplated His own Being; and in that contemplation, infinitely perfect, has seen the never-ending series of possible being, in which He can produce an image of His own Nature in

various orders or degrees. The definite degree of imitability by the creature of its Creator's perfection is its essence; actual, if that imitability is reduced to act by direct or indirect creation; possible, if it has not as yet been actuated. In the constituted order of existing things, the sole foundation of each definite nature is the prototypal or creative Idea in the mind of God. It is this which creates distinction of being, and gives unity to class, kind, species, genus. For the unity of creation is derivative. It originates in the unity of the Divine Ideas and of the Divine Nature. And the work set before the human intellect is, to follow these rays of light scattered over the vast field of created being, and to pursue them to their issues. As it proceeds, the rays gradually converge; one commingles with the other; till the mind approaches as near their source as may be in this world. Then has man gained wisdom. And the more he unifies his knowledge, the nearer his approach to wisdom.

But, if there be no God, or if, though possibly existing, He is the Unknown and Unknowable,—the whole foundation of metaphysic is utterly destroyed. To talk of the essence of things is a mere form of speech devoid of meaning. What Aristotle describes as "that which a being was to be in the mind of nature," is nothing more nor less than what it is. Essence is confounded with existence; and the accidents of being form as essential a part of its constitution, as the typical form which specifically distinguishes it. Consequently, general and abstract terms are the rude production of grammar. They can

have no objective reality. So we must rest content with the worst and basest form of Nominalism.

And such, in truth, brethren, has been the onward course of our modern philosophy. It is a significant fact that the study and knowledge of metaphysic receded wherever Protestantism made way; and receded in proportion to the latter's advance. Protestantism seemed to know instinctively that true philosophy is the heritage of the Church. So it warned its adherents from these bright fields of highest thought by its accustomed weapon of attack. It created a prejudice, by inventing a dictionary of abuse. Metaphysical study was held up to derision as labour wasted on scholastic subtleties, hair-splitting, logomachy. Its great Doctors were alternately pitied and scorned; so that this loftiest of sciences,—this science of sciences, the Divine science, as Aristotle calls it,—has only to be named to excite distrust and dismay.* Yet Protestantism did not at the first destroy the entire foundation. It is true that it really, when pursued to its logical issues, rejected God in the supernatural order; and so, could hardly hope to find Him in the natural. But still it professed to believe in a God. And so long as it

* Kant has called attention to this fact in the Introduction to his *Logic*. He says—"In moral philosophy we have not made more progress than the ancients. But, as to metaphysics, it seems as if we were at a loss with regard to the investigation of metaphysical truths. At present a sort of indifference for this science prevails; since many seem to pride themselves in speaking contemptuously of metaphysical inquiries, as mere useless, brains-beating speculations. And yet metaphysic is true philosophy."—Richardson's Translation. London, 1836. Introduction, sec. iv., p. 42.

clung to this one article of faith and primitive fact of philosophy, there were hopes. But now the progress of time has allowed of its full developement. Modern philosophy either rejects a God, or teaches that He is unknowable and unknown; in either case ignores Him as a subject of human thought. And what is the result? Why, that philosophy is limited to the impressions of sense or the acts of consciousness, which are, inconsequently enough, assumed as incontestable; and, either it relapses into an idealism, which is only a covert form of pantheism, or contents itself and its votaries with a dead and repulsive materialism.

But, again, among the great questions which engage the attention of the metaphysical student, there is scarcely one which is more important than the doctrine of final causes. If we turn our thoughts once more to the great act of creation, its importance will, I think, be readily understood. An intellectual being always energizes for an end. And that end is the law of his work, so far as it is under the control of his energy. In the productions of art, the artistic form of the material object depends entirely upon the end or result proposed by the artificer. So it is in the mystery of creation; but with this distinguishing excellence, that all matter and form is subject to the will and purpose of the great Artificer, seeing that He equally fashions both. Hence the end, which He has proposed in the wisdom of His omnipotent will, is the end of His creature in the full extension of its being. God is not only the Alpha, He is the Omega of created existence. It is true that human thought

cannot fathom the entire length and breadth, depth and height of final causes. This would be, in some sort, to measure God. But it can do much. From the natural fitness of things, as well as from the constant issues of nature, subject to the observation of many thousand years, much may be learnt under the direction of docile observation, or from the more stable deductions of reason. And such discoveries of wisdom have a noble place in the aristocracy of truths. They tell with a very practical force on the inductions of physical science; they are the great foundation of ethics, of economics, and of politics; they are a bright light within the sphere of natural theology. They are the middle term, so to speak, of the syllogism of creation, logically uniting it with its Creator. They fill matter with life, and unite apparent opposites,—the visible with the invisible, body with spirit. They solve the puzzle, traverse the labyrinth, and gather together under one the indefinite multiplicity of existing things. But then they suppose, they predicate a God; and a God, not unknown or unknowable, but seen, however dimly, in His works and their final issues. Without a God, final causes are a mere figment of the imagination, a pleasing but unsubstantial dream. It is true that without them multiplicity could never be reduced to unity, and the problem of existence would remain unsolved. It is true that nothing would remain but a series of phenomena, whose chance consistency might supply material for a merely subjective generalization. There could, however, be no fitting of part with part; no universal conspiracy towards one end of truth and justice, so far as human

knowledge is concerned. But it is more true that final causes presuppose a supreme Intellect, capable of conceiving complete unity of progress and conspiracy of energy out of an indefinitely complex multiplicity; a supreme Will, which can subdue all opposition; a supreme Power, which can work out the vast conception to its ultimate issues. And such a One is the true God.

It does not surprise us, then, to find that this modern philosophy, which has done its best to eliminate the idea of God from the cycle of human knowledge, should discard, not without expressions of contempt, the old doctrine of what it is pleased to term teleology. It is a logical necessity; but the baneful influences of such exclusion must tell with fatal influence on every branch of knowledge. And, in proportion as the mind awakens to higher and nobler objects of contemplation, and, soaring above all that is sensible and material, betakes itself to the scientific consideration of spiritual being and of the universe of essences, so do the difficulties, which are engendered by this unphilosophical scepticism, grow up about its path. There is but one remedy, which is worse than the disease. Theology is gone. Teleology has followed. The new philosopher must make short work of the rest. So fossils, and gases, and material forces, and organic structures may remain. But all idea of spiritual substance must be eradicated from his text-book of wisdom. It is a mere prejudice inherited from the past. The soul is mere consciousness of life; the will a determination of external forces. Man is a mere developement

of animal life; morality, a useful convention for purposes of social and political security. There is no world but that of matter; and so comparative anatomy, or—if you please—biology, and a stunted, deformed dissertation on the facts of consciousness, shall henceforth take the place of metaphysic.

Yet one step higher let us journey on together, dear hearers. The sublimest part of metaphysic;—the noblest effort of the noblest science,—is natural theology, or the science which treats of the existence, nature, and perfections of God. Inexhaustible in its fertility,—inexpressibly high by reason of the dignity of its object,—most certain in its demonstrative conclusions,—fearfully practical in its manifold bearings,—gathering up into itself, as into one focus of intolerable light, all the scattered rays of truth,—combining all the sciences, in their mutual subordination, round one common centre,—a bridge over that dark chasm which separates the subjective and the objective,—the only foundation of conceptual certainty,—the sole guarantee for that natural infallibility of our faculties which is incapable of proof,—the one resolution of the appalling enigma of human existence,—necessary antecedent of a supernatural revelation and a supernatural theology,—it is all in all to the acquisition of wisdom. Yet it is precisely this Queen of sciences which is most studiously excluded from the curriculum of modern philosophy. How is it possible, then, that modern thought should result in anything save a gigantic and most disastrous failure? Difficulties insuperable meet it on the very threshold. It is, therefore, obliged to make assump-

tions of its own, much more startling than those at which it professes to be scandalized in the teaching of past ages. It finds itself forced to discard all higher forms of truth; and, making the best of its position, recklessly asserts by the mouth of one of its prophets that "we are able to know what things affect our various sensibilities, or what may be compounded of these; *and our knowledge* extends no farther. We have a certain number of sensibilities, namely, in the senses (passive), and in the muscles (active); and when any of these is affected, we have knowledge or experience; we know sight, sounds, touches, tastes, smells, and various organic affections; we know resistance and movement. We know various emotional states, love, anger, fear, &c. We have many experiences from the discrimination and the agreement of our various states. In these we have our alphabet of the knowable. . . . But we cannot by any effort pass out of the compass of these primitive sensibilities. . . . We can know body by its sensible properties, and mind by our conscious feelings, thoughts, and volitions; and we can have nothing beyond."* Thus, at one fell swoop, natural theology, metaphysic, cosmology, ethics, are excluded from their accustomed places among the sciences; and we are reduced to logic, and a miserably imperfect and utterly erroneous psychology.

Oh! for the pride of man! What a melancholy survey! The words of the Apostle are indeed verified, *Dicentes se esse sapientest, sulti facti sunt*—"Proclaiming themselves to be wise,—the philosophers,—they

* Bain's *Deductive Logic*, Introduction, n. 19, p. 13.

have become fools.”* Men have wanted to be wiser than God ; and, as if to make sure of their effort, have shut God out of their speculations. They have been dissatisfied with the range which God has allowed to human science ; and they have lost all. God has said plainly enough by the voice of nature, “You must trust to the infallibility of the faculties with which I have furnished your souls.” They have replied, “We will not trust till we can prove that infallibility.” God has said, “I give you an understanding ; and first principles there are, partial reflex of My infinite wisdom, which that understanding shall embrace because of their intrinsic evidence.” Human arrogance has answered, “I must prove them, I must prove them.” God has said, “I give you senses as ministers to truth, and the vast Bible of My beautiful creation from which you may, by their aid, continually advance in knowledge of them and of Myself.” Men have answered, “We will not accept that Bible, and will not trust our senses, till we can, in accordance with our own theories, prove the existence of the former, and the infallibility of the latter.” What is the result ? The great foundations of truth have been broken down. The wisdom of past ages has become, in popular estimation, as an old man’s dream. The fountains of knowledge have been dammed up with stones. Over the deepest and most momentous truths a veil of darkness has been drawn ; and men see not their light. Certainty has given place to universal doubt ; and over the whole fertile field of thought a deadly

* Rom. i. 22.

blight has fallen, withering all the verdure of its life.

Meanwhile truth shines down through all the ages of the past for those that have eyes to see. Her light comes from the Throne of God, and pours itself over the whole world of corporeal and spiritual being; and its rays, when we trace them back, converge towards the inaccessible glory which surrounds His presence. There is but One, only True. All truth is His. His Word is the infinite truth and wisdom, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, *in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ et scientiæ absconditi*—"in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and science."* No truth is there outside of Him, and He says, *Si vos manseritis in sermone meo, vere discipuli mei eritis. Et cognoscetis veritatem, et veritas liberabit vos*—"If you remain in My word, ye shall be of a truth My disciples. And ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free,"†—free from what the Apostle calls, *profanas vocum novitates, et oppositiones falsi nominis scientiæ*—"profane novelties of words, and oppositions of science, falsely so called."‡

* Coloss. ii. 3.

† St. John viii. 32.

‡ I Tim. vi. 20.

SERMON III.

GOD THE SUPREME AND ONLY GOOD.

ST. MATT. xix. 17.

Quid me interrogas de bono? Unus est bonus, Deus.

Why dost thou ask me of the good? One is good, God.

THERE are two great faculties in man, which are essentially independent of matter or bodily organism, to whatever extent they may be limited in their present exercise by reason of that intimate union which subsists between soul and body, and by the necessary consequences of such union. It is indeed true that they are, so to speak, supplied with provision by the senses in the actual and temporary order; but it is likewise true that they energize by an innate force which removes them from all necessity of sensible conditions or sensible control. They in special manner constitute that image and likeness of God within us, which we received at the time of our creation; and from their existence and spiritual nature is derived one great argument of rational philosophy in favour of the immortality of the soul. I am alluding, of course, to the intellect and will.

In the preceding conferences I submitted to your consideration, devout brethren, the one object of the intellectual faculty, which, as we have seen, is truth under every form and in every order. I have, moreover, endeavoured to show that God is the Alpha and Omega of truth;—at once the necessary condition of its existence, and the term of its evolution;—the sun from whose bosom the rays of light emerge to light up the whole creation, and the focus to which all those rays ultimately converge. It is my present purpose to submit the object of the will to a similar examination, with the certain confidence of arriving at a parallel conclusion.

There are four principal characteristics of the human will, by the which it is distinguished from the intellectual faculty. For, in the first place, it is blind. It cannot, so to speak, see its own object, nor can it discern one object from another. The intellect is to it in the place of eyes; setting before it, as it does, the object or objects which are fitted to arouse it into action. Hence it follows that the action of the will is necessarily posterior to that of the intellect, and presupposes the latter as the condition of its possibility. Another difference consists in this, that, while the intellect receives its object into itself and makes it one with itself by a process of mental assimilation, the will, on the contrary, issues forth towards its object, and seeks an assimilation with that object as the condition of its own perfection. Again: the intellect has no power of choice. If any truth whatever is duly presented before it, provided such truth is sufficiently illumined

with the light of its own evidence, it is incapable of withholding its assent. The will, on the other hand, is never of itself compelled to an act of adhesion, save in immediate presence of that infinitely perfect Object, beyond Whom desire is metaphysically impossible. There is, in fact, nothing created which has the power of directly curtailing the liberty of choice. Finally; the intellect is, as it were, the Senate in the commonwealth of the soul; the will is its Executive. It is the will which in man is the mainspring of action, which gives to history its facts and variety of colour, which forms the moral habits, and is on earth the corner-stone of human happiness and perfection. For, though it is most true that the perfect life is that which is contemplative of truth, yet, in order to reach it, the passions must have been first subdued, the imagination purified and rightly directed, and the soul, by these means, completely educated in a habitual submission to the moral order. But this is the direct and immediate office of the will.

Remove from these characteristic qualities of the created will whatsoever there may be of imperfection; and all that remains will find its infinitely perfect prototype in the will of God; for every excellence of the former is but a dim and feeble likeness of the exceeding excellence of the latter. I hope to be able to make this plain to you in the sequel.

In the meantime it behoves me to borrow from metaphysical science certain statements which are necessary to an elucidation of the subject before us; and I will endeavour to announce them as

clearly and concisely as I can. There are three transcendental qualities of all being. For any being whatsoever may be considered in three ways, or rather under three different relations which are not mere mental distinctions, but have a foundation and objective reality in its nature. We may contemplate it as at one with itself and distinct from everything besides itself. It is *one*; and this property of being is called its *unity*. Again: every being is capable of becoming the object of some intellect, or is fashioned after the model of some idea preexisting in some intellect, and corresponds to that idea. Considered in this its possible or actual relation to the intellect, it is said to be *true*; *truth* therefore is its second transcendental property. Once more: all being has a necessary relation to that other spiritual faculty, the will. As being, it is fitted to become an object of desire, a term of fruition. As such it is *good*; and this its third transcendental property is called *goodness*. These properties are called *transcendental*, because they are not confined to one particular series, but they attach themselves to all kinds and classes of being. They are the heritage of accidents as well as substance; they fill with their presence all the highest genera or categories, as they are called, of Aristotle, and go beyond, *transcend* them.

It is plain, then, from what has been said, that *goodness* is the formal object of the will. We never desire after anything, much less voluntarily choose it, unless it seems to us to be good. Of course there is room here for every sort of deception. The

imagination may deck the object with fictitious colours; the passions may interfere to make good evil and evil good; bad habits may have so darkened the eye of the intellect as to betray it into presenting before the will that which is utterly unworthy of its love; but this is certain, that the will could never choose or desire anything which does not allure it at the time by its apparent goodness. Such a procedure would be in simple defiance of its essential constitution. But it is as well to remember on the other hand that there is a gradation in things which are good. What is good for a part may not be good for the whole: what is good for the body may not be good for the soul; that which may be a good to the passions may not be a good to the reason; what is good in sickness is not necessarily good in health; and what is good for a young man may not be good for the old. It does not therefore follow that any given being has no goodness in it of any kind, because, for instance, it may be for us, considered as rational and responsible creatures, a simple evil. Who would deny that life is a good? Yet a man may be placed in such circumstances that the preservation of life could not in reason become an object of his choice. And if through cowardice he should be seduced into such an election of his will, he would be condemned by the universal voice of those who were cognizant of the fact. So in like manner the pleasure of taste is a sensible good, yet one whose indulgence is of so great danger to man as at present constituted, that it has been put under considerable restriction as well

by ethical teaching as by the commands of the Church.

It is easy to conclude, from what has been said, that there is a graduated scale of goods, corresponding to the order of faculties in the commonwealth of the soul; and that, as a consequence of such graduation and correlation, there must be a supreme good. For as the tendency of man is one though complex, so the end of such tendency must be one likewise; and that end for which he was created will be his supreme good.

By another division of the good, well known to the student of the Peripatetic philosophy, we arrive at the same conclusion. For Aristotle teaches,—what each man's experience abundantly confirms,—that there are some goods which are simply and only good because they are useful as means for the attainment of another good above themselves. Other goods there are, which are not only useful in such way, but, beyond this, are partially desirable in themselves because of their correspondence with some one or other of our desires or propensions. There is one, however, which is not good because it is useful for the attainment of another good above itself,—seeing that, according to the hypothesis, there is no good above it,—but which is supremely desirable in and for itself.

One more remark; and then I shall proceed to the consideration of the particular subject to which it is my purpose this afternoon to invite your special attention. This final good is *supreme*, not only as being the highest and noblest among a vast multitude

of other goods which are distinct from, connumerated with, and outside of it, but it is supreme, because it includes in superlative degree all other goods whatsoever within itself and infinitely transcends them all. If the former hypothesis were correct, that the supreme Good is only the noblest and best among an indefinite series of lower goods, it would be a contradiction in terms to call such an end the supreme good; forasmuch as the lowest sensible good conjoined with it would make it greater and better than it was before. The supreme good therefore must contain all that is good within itself, must answer to every well-ordered desire of our complex nature, must infinitely exceed them all, must direct all in harmony towards itself, and must therefore be complex, many, yet wondrously one.

I say, then, that God, and God alone, is the supreme good;—the adequate Object of the Uncreated and created Will. In other words, He is the supreme good to Himself; He is also the supreme good of all His creatures, and more particularly of His intelligent creation. But He is the one Object of His own infinite and uncreated Will after a sort in many ways distinct from, because inconceivably more perfect than He is the one Object of the created will. These are the points which it is my purpose to develope to-day.

I. I must remind you, dear brethren, of what I have already said when speaking of God as the infinite Truth, and of His most perfect Wisdom. Our ideas of Him are taken from all that is most excellent in His own creation. Nor are the ideas

about our God which we receive from Divine Revelation an exception to the rule. For the Holy Ghost speaks to us in the only language which we can understand; and makes known to us the mysteries of Uncreated Being by means of a vocabulary derived from created perfections. We speak of the mind of God, of His Wisdom, His Ideas, His Will, Goodness, Freedom, of His Power, Eternity, Omnipresence, of His Love, Mercifulness, Forgiveness; and we speak truly, but we do not speak adequately. How could we so speak, when endeavouring to express His illimitable Essence? We speak after the manner of men, as we understand after the manner of men. And though we succeed in forming a conception of our God which is quite distinct from all conceptions of other objects, yet that conception is an utterly unworthy idea, at the very best, of Him Who "passeth knowledge." It is more negative than positive; for it is principally concerned in removing from our positive notions of Him those limits or imperfections, which are necessarily contained in those positive representations of Him by reason of their original derivation from the creature. Yet, as I said before, we speak truly of Him, so far as it goes, when we speak of His Intellect and Truth, of His Will and Goodness, and so of the rest of His Perfections. For God is Truth; God is Goodness. But then we must be on our guard lest we conceive of these as really distinct in Him. We distinguish them, because we cannot help ourselves; but they are really, or objectively, undistinguishable in Him. He is infinitely One in

the simplicity, as in the *unicity** of His Nature. Hence *ex parte rei* His Will is identical with His Goodness; nor can either be separated objectively from His Essence. We speak too of the desires of God; and here, again, we speak truly. But when we think thus of Him, we must exclude from our conception all that implies mere faculty or even the first movement of the faculty. For such ideas derogate from His incomprehensible Excellence, Who is one pure and simple Act. His Will does not tend towards, and in this sense *desire*, His Goodness: because in the Eternity since He is God, He is in perfect fruition of His Goodness. Nevertheless in the fulness of that Act Which is Himself, there is all that vital action of the Will which we understand by desire, only unlimited by aught of imperfection, and melting, so to speak, into that infinite Reality which is Himself.

Ever bearing in mind this most necessary caution, let us proceed to consider with reverence and humility what grounds there are for asserting that God is the infinite Goodness.

God is the infinite and supreme Good, because He is infinite Being. He cannot be limited by Himself; for this would imply the contingency of His own Nature in relation to Himself, and such an idea involves in many ways a metaphysical contradiction. He cannot be limited by another;

* The reader must pardon the introduction of this word, which is borrowed from the language of the Schools. It saves the trouble of a long paraphrase, and expresses the unity at once and the *alone* unity of God.

or He would at once cease to be God. But all being, *as such*, is good. It is of a nature to attract to itself the volition, or desire, or complacency, of some order of created will. The fulness of being, therefore, would be the fulness of good. Goodness would be as illimitable as Being by virtue of the transcendental relation existing between, and the real identity of the two. And such is God. Consequently there can be no goodness outside of God. For whatever there is existing as if distinct from Himself, is contained in infinite excess of perfection within Himself. God is, then, infinite goodness because He is the infinite, fathomless Ocean of Being.

But, again,—to put the same thought in another way—God is infinite Goodness because of His infinite Perfections. There is nothing noble, sublime, heroic, attracting in the creature, which is not to be found in its fulness of perfection in our good God. Beauty is one of the qualities in a creature, which has an attraction, a fascination, peculiarly its own. But God is beautiful. He is Beauty Itself, “the altogether lovely.” It is the Vision of Him which is the beatitude of the blest, which fetters the liberty of their will for everlasting in the sweet chains of His all-conquering love, which, seen, as it were, through a cloud, and for a moment, has raised Saints on earth into ecstasy; while the loss of it is the most terrible and tormenting punishment of the damned. How noble, how love-inspiring, how heroic is Sanctity! It is this which gives to the Saints of the Church that power over the human heart of which we find so many instances in their lives. But God

is infinite Sanctity. The Church on earth, borrowing her anthem from the choirs of Heaven, is wont each day in the ineffable Mysteries to sing, *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth; pleni sunt cæli et terra majestate Gloriæ tuæ*—"Holy Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts; heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy Glory."* This, my brethren, is His *moral* goodness, the supreme Law of all created wills. Who can bear to look with unblenching eye upon the full blaze of its glory? Truly does St. Paul say of our God that He "inhabith light inaccessible."†

There is another form of moral beauty which has an attraction peculiar to itself. Among the ethical virtues no one perhaps is there which moves the heart of men more powerfully than that of mercy and compassion. "It is twice bless'd; it blesseth him that gives and him that takes: 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest." But this is precisely the favourite virtue with which God clothes Himself in His own chosen manifestations. In the Sacred Scriptures, while all His terrible and awful attributes are habitually kept out of sight, or are only brought forward under the continued provocation of obstinate rebellion, His loving Mercy and fathomless Compassions are the key-note of inspired teaching. *Dominus patiens et multæ misericordiæ*—"The Lord is patient and of great mercy."‡ *Confitemini Domino; quoniam bonus, quoniam in æternum misericordia ejus*—"Praise the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy

* Isaias vi. 3. Cf. Apoc. iv. 8. † 1 Tim. vi. 16.

‡ Numb. xiv. 18.

is everlasting."* *Quoniam tu, Domine, suavis, et mitis; et multæ misericordiæ omnibus invocantibus te*—"For Thou, O Lord, art sweet, and gentle, and plenteous in mercy to all who call upon Thee."† I might cite a multitude more of passages where this winning portrait of God is given. But I wish to call your special attention, devout brethren, to another phase of this same endearing attribute. If we may judge according to the testimony of past ages and the witness of our own hearts, there is something peculiarly alluring in a sensitive disposition, when it is subject to reason and has not been allowed to degenerate into a mawkish touchiness. It is so delicate in itself and inspires such refinement in intercourse with others, that it peoples the picture of social life with the tender and unearthly outlines of a Fra Angelico or a Francia. Well, it is very remarkable how our good God wills to represent Himself to us as extremely sensitive about us His children, our affairs, our interests, our eternal weal. Hear Him thus gently pleading with His rebellious and ungrateful people: *Nunc ergo, habitatores Jerusalem et viri Juda, judicate inter me et vineam meam. Quid est quod debui ultra facere vineæ meæ, et non feci ei? An quod expectavi ut faceret uvas, et fecit labruscas?*—"Now, therefore, ye inhabitants of Jerusalem and ye men of Judah, judge between Me and My vine. What is there that I ought to have done more to My vineyard, and have not done to it? Why was it that I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes?"‡

* 1 Paralip. xvi. 34. † Psalm lxxxv. 5. ‡ Isaias v. 3, 4.

The whole parable is very touching. For God therein likens His people to a chosen vineyard on which He has expended the greatest labour and care; but after all His loving toil He reaps from it nothing but wild grapes. And then He tenderly expostulates with them in the words which I have just quoted. A like instance occurs in the New Testament. How unspeakably moving is the pity with which the compassionate Redeemer addresses the incredulous city: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not!"* And yet more touchingly on another occasion does Jesus give vent to His sorrow and regret in sight of the doomed city. Approaching Jerusalem on His descent from Mount Olivet, He saw it spread out at His feet; and when He saw it, He wept and exclaimed: *Quia si cognovisses et tu, et quidem in hac die tua, quæ ad pacem tibi*—"If thou hadst known, even thou, and that too in this thy day, the things that pertain to thy peace."† And, to sum up in brief what I have been drawing out in detail concerning this most beautiful picture of God's Mercy, there is one attribute which our God *especially* chooses in the abstract form as one of His own chosen names; and it is that of love or charity. "God is Charity"‡ are the words of the Apostle of the Sacred Heart. What a revelation of His Goodness is this!

* St. Matt. xxiii. 37.

† St. Luke xix. 42.

‡ 1 St. John iv. 8.

I might have in like manner summoned before you many others of the great attributes of God, and have shown you how in these likewise His supreme Goodness shines forth for those who have eyes to see. I might have recalled to your memory the attractive power that attaches to great wisdom. I might have appealed to your experience of the fact that strength of will and execution has always conciliated to itself the admiration of mankind. I might have summoned the great lyric poet of Rome as witness of the noble grandeur of character with which they are invested in common estimation, who exhibit a steadfastness of purpose and evenness of action. And then I might have led you on to contemplate the Wisdom, Power, and Immutability of God. The same great argument might in like manner have been pursued in the consideration of all His other Perfections. But time would fail me, were I to attempt so vast a theme. I have therefore limited myself to those special attributes of the great Father of heaven and earth, which represent to us His moral Goodness, and—if I may dare to use the phrase of Him,—His goodness of heart. Yet in all His Attributes we recognize the Supreme Good, infinite, fathomless, incomprehensibly perfect. In all there is that which we seek, desire, yearn after;—that which allures, captivates, fills us with awe and wonder. And the illimitable Ocean of His Love and Mercy,—that attribute which stands out so conspicuously eminent above its Brethren—takes from us much of that fear which otherwise would have oppressed us in presence of His Majesty, converts

the rest into filial homage, and respect, and of Itself is so irresistible in its attractiveness as to compel in the hearts of those who fully know It that sweet desire

To *live* within the arms of God, and to lie upon His Breast,
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

But there is another reason, and that too of the gravest force, why our God is the Supreme and only Good. It is to be sought in the fact that He is the one, original, efficient and exemplary Cause of all that is good. I have intentionally used the phrase, "the one, *original* efficient cause," lest I should for one moment be accused of denying,—what I should be the first most strenuously to maintain against Occasionalists of whatever school,—the real efficiency of secondary causes. But, then, even while admitting the reality of secondary causes as such, we must never forget that all their productive action is derivative. It is not self-created, otherwise it would be the action of the First Cause, not of second causes. And, as a fact, throughout the whole range of efficient causation, the lower or inferior cause receives its casual action from the superior, and this last again from one superior to itself; and so the whole chain of efficient causes ascends by successive links to the first link, which is the primary and original cause. Hence it follows that all causation or production of effect, and all causality or capacity of producing an effect, must be traced in ultimate analysis to the First Great Cause. Not only so; but since the effect must be virtually precontained in its cause (for no one

gives what he does not possess himself), it follows that He Who is Cause of all causes is in like manner Cause of all effects not only actual but possible. But an effect, *as such*, is good. Therefore the First Cause is the efficient Cause of all created or creatable goodness, and consequently precontains it in Himself.

Furthermore: an efficient cause if it be intelligent, produces its result after some type or model pre-existing in the mind; which type has received the name of the exemplar cause. Nor is it otherwise in the case of non-intellectual efficient causes. For, though in themselves incapable of possessing such models, they are nevertheless *indirectly* or *remotely* governed by a like causality; since their efficiency is directed by the exemplary ideas existing in the mind of that superior cause from whom they have received their causal energy. God therefore, as the one primary efficient Cause, must needs have in Himself the pattern or model of all created goodness, possible as well as actual. And, as a fact, Theology teaches us that God, contemplating His own infinitely perfect Being, conceives of that Being as imitable in unnumbered grades of nearness to that Perfection which none of them can reach. These Divine ideas,—to speak after the language of men,—are the prototypal ideas of creation and of something infinitely beyond,—not created but creatable,—that vast realm of the possible which man conceives but cannot comprehend. It follows, therefore, as a necessary consequence, that God has, and has ever had, in Himself all created or creatable goodness, because He is in His own Nature the one Exemplar of it

all, and something infinitely more. He is, therefore, again the Supreme Good considered as universal efficient and exemplary Cause.

If it should be objected that law in physical and spiritual phenomena sufficiently accounts for what are called effects, and that therefore the doctrine of causation is unnecessary, and the argument derived from it gratuitous, I reply that such an objection is a patent sophism. For law in its widest signification stands for persistence of similar phenomena in similar conjunctures and within certain range of being, while it implies orderly distinction of such phenomena from others under other circumstances and within other ranges of being. When it is used in its more precise meaning it contains within it the idea of rule, command, sanction. In either case it must take its place among what we call effects. For order necessarily connotes an orderer; and command, no less than sanction, connotes a living authority, both of which are causes of the one and of the other. And thus the argument proceeds as before.

Take then the whole creation visible and invisible, as it spreads itself out before us in its manifold and exuberant beauty, what a revelation it is of the infinite Goodness of our God! St. Paul, preaching to the Lycaonians declares that God "left not Himself without testimony, doing good from heaven, giving rains, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with joy and gladness."* And is there not a superabounding testimony to the Divine Goodness in the varied charms and orderly succession of the four

* Acts xiv. 16.

seasons of the year? Even winter in its white mantle of snow, its cold frosty air, its stillness and deathlike solitude is very fair to look upon. But St. Paul alludes expressly to the "fruitful seasons." And of a truth what a variety of loveliness there is in them from the first buttons of the spring, and the emerald green of the early trees with the hum of awakening life, and the merry youth of stream and river, onward to the long days and short nights of summer with perfumed air and languid sunsets, the gay coronet of flowers, and the breath of new-mown grass. Then comes yellow autumn with its golden corn and cornucopia of fruits, its varied and ever-varying colours in forest, wood, and thicket, its wild skies, and turbulent waves, and then its pattering rainfalls.

Take another lesson from the sea. The sweet Psalmist of Israel has told us that "they that go down to the sea in ships . . . these have seen the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep."* And who is there that can gaze upon that apparently boundless mass of waters unmoved? How ever the same, yet ever different, ever new! Now it is quiet as a summer's lake, now rocking like a cradle; and now again, lashed up to fury by the winds, it rears on high the manes of its multitudinous horses, and charging with ungovernable fury on the shore, leaves the wide foam of its rage along the affrighted coast.

The Wise Man addresses God and says, "Thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight."† And here again a fresh lesson of God's

* Psalm cvi. 23, 24.

† Wisdom xi. 21.

Goodness is laid out before us. Look upward to those vast armies of stars shining in the clearness of the night. The calculations of men of science have revealed to us the stretch of their distance, the order of their motion, and in part the unity of their kingdom. Yet are they present to us by their light. Are there not here faint vestiges of One Who is infinite and omnipresent? Go next to the chains of mountains unmoved, unchanging through ages of time, emblems of immobility, greatness, strength. Then, by the aid of a microscope, search into the mysteries of a drop of water so minute that it clings to the point of a pin. In that lake, as it appears under the glass, are *infusoria* feeding upon green water-mites much smaller than themselves, and *diatoms*, which, like a fleet of boats, shoot through the length and breadth of this scarcely distinguishable drop. Exquisitely formed, though shut out from ordinary view, are they nothings in creation? Can they boast of nought save their microscopic beauty of colour and proportion? Why, my brethren, the mere skeletons of the latter are lining the bed of the Atlantic for many a mile, and are generating, if time be granted them, the Andes of a future continent.

Again: the three children in the fiery furnace praised God, and said—*Benedicite, universa germinantia in terra, Domino; laudate et superexaltate eum in sæcula*—"O all ye things which spring up into life on the earth, bless the Lord; praise Him and magnify Him for ever."* Of a truth what a mystery is life in all its forms! What beauty in its varied

* Dan. iii. 76.

developments! Who of men has been able to lay his finger on that invisible something which distinguishes plant or tree from a flint, and bird, fish, beast, reptile, from both and from each other? Yet to it we owe those pleasures, too great to number, which recreate the senses of the body, and fill the imagination with forms of beauty. It is that unknown something which gives to the sensitive plant the mimic movement of a higher order;—which carries on the process of assimilation within the animal, restores its losses from without, supplies it with locomotion, and which gives to it an instinct and a sort of will, which leads us to the border of the intelligent creature. Here too is the goodness of our God manifested after a nobler fashion. And as His footsteps in creation become plainer and more deeply set, deeper mystery surrounds His handiwork. Investigate for a while what may be called the numismatics of life. Go into a geological museum, and survey those plentiful and ever-varying relics of long-ended dynasties of being. What an endless variety in the *flora*, from the gigantic tree to the small and delicate algæ. No less marvellous are the specimens of its *fauna*, from the vast, elephantine beasts of grotesque construction to the trilobites and annelides of the earlier epochs. Why were they once created, ere man could claim dominion over them, and why did they disappear, ere human eye could admire, or human art could bend them to its service? There is but one answer: It is a mystery, and God is prodigal in goodness.

Yet once more. It is written : " God created man to His own image ; to the image of God He created him ; male and female He created them."* We have now passed beyond the mere footsteps, or vestiges of God, and stand in presence of His image and likeness. I trust I may be excused if in this place I adopt as my own the beautiful words of our great poet : " What a piece of work is man ! How noble in reason ! how infinite in faculties ! in form and moving, how express and admirable ! in action, how like an angel ! in apprehension, how like a god ! the beauty of the world ! the paragon of animals ! " And that godlike reason, that freedom of will, that range of faculties, that delicacy of sense,—nay, that beauty of form and grace of action too,—are all contained virtually, eminently, perfectly, infinitely in our God, the One supremely Good.

Yes, all creation proclaims the supereminent Goodness of the great First Cause. " The firmament on high is His beauty, the beauty of heaven with its glorious show. . . . Look upon the rainbow, and bless Him that made it ; it is very beautiful in its brightness. . . . As the birds lighting upon the earth, He scattereth snow. . . . The eye admireth the beauty of the whiteness thereof, and the heart is astonished at the shower thereof. . . . There are great and wonderful works : a variety of beasts, and of all living things, and the monstrous creatures of whales. Through Him is established the end of their journey, and by His word all things are regulated. We shall say much, and yet shall want words ; but

* Gen. i. 27.

the sum of our words is, *He is all*. What shall we be able to do to glorify Him ? for the Almighty Himself is above all His works. . . . Glorify the Lord as much as ever you can ; for He will yet far exceed, and His magnificence is wonderful. Blessing the Lord, exalt Him as much as you can ; for He is above all praise. When you exalt Him, put forth all your strength, and be not weary : for you can never go far enough. . . . There are many things hidden from us that are greater than these ; for we have seen but a few of His works.”*

II. To pass on now to my second point, I say that God, as the infinite Good, is the one, sole object of His own Will.

You must allow me, my dear brethren, to remind you of a distinction which I have already set before you at the commencement of the present discourse. The supreme good is not supreme in the sense that it is the chief among an army of co-ordinates ; but it is supreme, because it contains, comprehends somehow, all actual and possible good within itself. As God therefore is the supreme Good, He contains in His own limitless Plenitude all goodness in Himself. There is nothing that is good, which is not either formally or virtually, in either case infinitely, contained in Him. It is true that in certain cases there may arise a difficulty of conceiving how such inclusion is possible ; the difficulty arises, however, not from the absolute invidence of the truth, but from the weakness of the human intellect, which can never hope to grasp the infinite. Thus, to take an instance,

* Ecclus. xliii.

we may be puzzled to understand how sensible good, or that which is convenient to bodily sense, can be contained in the Divine Essence ; and, even if it were, it is still more puzzling to conceive how it can in any way become the object of the Divine Will. For God is a pure Spirit ; how then can He find satisfaction in what gives pleasure only to the senses ? Yet, when we come to consider it more nearly, I will not say that the difficulty disappears, but at least it is greatly diminished. For it must ever be borne in mind that all that is good in the creature is indeed in God, but purified from all imperfection whatsoever, as well as from all limit. Now sensible goods, precisely as such, necessarily connote imperfection. Hence Theologians teach us that while simple and absolute good is *formally* in God, all that is mixed and relative, all that contains defect in its essential constituents, is in God *eminently*. If you ask me what is meant by such phrases, I should reply that in the former case the specific form is in God, only *not by way of form* ; whereas in the latter case the Divine Essence contains eminently, that is in the virtue of a superior order, that which is infinitely equivalent to that particular form of goodness. It can energize upon the peculiar faculty which tends towards such an object, and satisfy that faculty as though It were the object, by virtue of Its infinite Reality and infinite Strength. And, in the particular instance which I am considering, it seems to me that the ecstasies of the Saints, in which the senses are wrapt in a sea of delights, — the accounts, handed down to us in Hagiography, of a super-celestial food drawn from

the sacred Wounds of Jesus Christ,—the description of the heavenly Jerusalem given to us by St. John in his Apocâlypse, alike inspire us with a well-founded assurance that, as our formal Beatitude will consist in the vision of God by our intellect, and as its substantial complement will be found in the fruition of Him by the will, so He will fill the bodily senses with overflowing delights by virtue of the infinity of His Goodness.

The other difficulty is harder of solution. It seems hard to understand how the Divine Will can take pleasure in that equivalent, precisely as it is equivalent to sensible good. Yet, on the other hand, God must love all that is purely good ; and love it because it is good to Himself, good to His creatures. He can rejoice in such equivalence, though He cannot be affected by sensible delights. If you ask me *how* this is, I will reply in the words of holy Job, *Forsitan vestigia Dei comprehendes, et usque ad perfectum Omnipotentem reperies ?*—"Peradventure thou wilt comprehend the footsteps of God, and wilt find out the Almighty to perfection ?"*

Let it suffice then for us, dearly beloved, to accept what reason demonstrates and to believe what Revelation teaches, viz., that God contains within Himself the *pleroma* of all goodness. All that is outside Him of goodness He gave ; and, giving, communicated of His own, without subtracting one iota from His Plenitude. As a sun He scatters His rays of light over His vast creation ; yet is His own splendour undiminished.

* Job xi. 7.

So far as regards the Object of the Divine Volition. Now, if we direct our attention to the Subject, that is, to the Divine Will Itself, we must necessarily own that It is infinite in Itself, infinite in Its desire. Let it not however escape our memory that when we speak of the Divine Desire, we are compelled to exclude from the idea which is conveyed by the term all that is potential, or purely facultative; and we intend to express by it an eternal act of the Divine Will, which abides as act, and as *one* act, since God is God. That act, then, is infinite in itself, infinite in its comprehension of the infinite Good. It therefore, and It alone, can fully embrace the Divine Goodness. And It has always embraced that object of Its love, has ever been in perfect fruition of It, simply because It is pure Act. Accordingly there is a perfect equation between the Two;—the Divine Will and Its Object; for both are infinite. Nevertheless it is not quite correct to say that there is a perfect equation between them, because there is really a complete identity. For, as the Divine Intellect and the Divine Truth are only distinguishable from each other by human reason, but are in reality indissolubly One (for they are the Divine Being or Essence, God Himself), and yet the Divine Nature includes in Its infinite Perfection what corresponds to both after the order of an incomprehensible Simplicity; so, in like manner, are the Divine Goodness and Divine Will indissolubly One. Nay, what is more, the latter are indissolubly One with the two former; for all is God. Hence the Fathers are fond of describing God as an infinite

Ocean of Essence (*Pelagus Essentiæ*); and God Himself, revealing to Moses and His chosen people His incommunicable Name, calls Himself, "I am Who am" (*Ego sum Qui sum*); and again, "He Who is" (*Qui est*).^{*} When we have said this, we have said all ; for all is said that can be said.

It follows from what I have premised that there not only is, but there must be, an eternal fruition of the Divine Goodness by the Divine Will, and hence an eternal Beatitude. For, as that Will and that Goodness are substantially one, there exists of necessity the most perfect union, because a perfect identity, between the Subject desiring and the Object of desire ; and, moreover, a union substantial, without beginning, without end. I deduce thence another conclusion, viz. : that the Divine Beatitude is inamissible, not by constitution or by voluntary effort, but of metaphysical necessity. The Beatitude of God is substantial, essential. In a word, it is Himself. He cannot lose it ; for, if this were possible, He would be able to lose Himself ; in other words, He would cease to be God.

There is another conclusion which demonstratively follows from the doctrine I have been developing. The Divine Beatitude, like the Divine Goodness, is immutable. Change is impossible, where the two terms, involving possibility of change, are truly one. Beatitude consists in the possession of the Supreme Good ; where then the Possessor and the Possessed are essentially One, and Both infinite, there increase or decrease, mutation of whatever kind in fruition,

^{*} Exod. iii. 14.

is a simple impossibility. For it is plain enough, that change in relation,—to apply to things Divine an idea borrowed from the imperfection of the creature,—of necessity involves a real distinction between the terms of such relation. If, then, the terms of relation, as we conceive, are essentially identical, how is change possible, even in thought?

Lastly, it follows from what has been said, that the Beatitude of God is infinite. For the Object, or the Divine Goodness, is infinite; and the Divine Will or Volition is infinite; and the Divine Beatitude is the indissoluble conjunction of the two, or rather, as I have said, their identity. Therefore, the Divine Beatitude is infinite.

The consideration, which I have thus set before you, my hearers, of the Divine Goodness and of the eternal, immutable, infinite fruition of that Goodness by the Divine Will, leads us at once to the conclusion towards which I have been tending. For it is evident, from what has been said, that God is to Himself the all-sufficient Source of His own Felicity. He has in Himself, or rather He is Himself, all possible Good,—Good in its consummate perfection. It is inalienably His, for it is Himself; ever present with Him, because it is Himself present to Himself. And in that infinite Ocean of Goodness, all created good, as I have said before, is contained and surpassingly contained; from that Goodness it is derived; and on that Goodness it depends. Consequently, the Divine Will cannot possibly meet with any good outside Itself, which It does not find in Itself, in the Divine Nature. Hence it follows that the Felicity of God is incapable of

increase. If He should determine to create millions of new worlds with innumerable kinds of new life, irrational as well as rational, these would not add to His Beatitude. He might, on their creation, pronounce them to be good, as He did in the six days of His actual Creation; but there would be in such case no new goodness for Him. All would have been precontained in Himself.

Once more: it follows, as a consequence from these truths, that the Will of God is infinitely free as regards all that is outside of Him, but that It is not free in Its fruition of the Supreme Good. For liberty is a perfection, and therefore, like all other perfections, must be contained in God,—to speak after the manner of men. But the will is never naturally deprived of its freedom save in presence of the adequate object of its desire. Accordingly the human will is free to embrace, or hold back from, all created goods; it is only not free in presence of its Supreme Good. So is it with the Divine Will. God was free to create, or not create, the worlds which He has made and the things inanimate and animate that are therein. Nor does it in any wise interfere with this great truth that, from everlasting, God had determined in fitting season to call forth into being the present order. For though it is true that His determination is eternal, and that, having been made, it could not have been not made, and that moreover, because existing it is irrevocable, yet this does not hinder but that such determination is free in its source,—nay, infinitely free. Mutability in act, or succession

in time, are not essential properties of free-will ; otherwise free-will would be of necessity an imperfection. The eternity, therefore, and immutability of the Divine Volition in the given instance is attributable, not to any defect of freedom, but to the infinity of the Divine Perfections.

On the other hand, though God is not free to love or not to love His own Goodness, this coercion of His Will, as it may be called, argues no imperfection in Him. So far, indeed, is this from being the case, that it serves, on the contrary, to establish His inconceivable Perfection. For, if we take into account the very nature of the will and the absolute identity existing, *ex parte rei*, between the Divine Will and the Goodness which It loves and of which It has for that very reason eternal fruition, it will be plain that freedom of choice in this case would involve a metaphysical contradiction. God would be, so to speak, capable of self-annihilation.

III. I now proceed, in the third place, to show how God, as the infinite Good, is the sovereign End of the created will.

It is very plain to all save to those modern writers,—I cannot call them philosophers,—who have repudiated all the great principles of Psychology and Metaphysic, and have, not without self-contradiction, proclaimed the reign of a universal scepticism, that intelligent creatures must have an end ;—an end worthy alike of the Creator and of the creature. I speak in particular of intelligent creatures, because the whole argument, developed in the present course of lectures, has them for its especial object. But, of

course, the doctrine of final causes applies with equal force to the rest of the creation whether animate or inanimate. Nor is that doctrine only or primarily communicated to us by supernatural Revelation. It is an appanage of human reason. For he, who of Pagan philosophers is undeniably the first,—he who is the truest and noblest interpreter of nature,—who, by careful process of reason, forestalled Revelation in the enunciation of those more recondite truths of natural religion which man, by his unaided powers was of capacity to reach,—whose philosophy has since received the *imprimatur* of the Church,—Aristotle, at the outset of his Nicomachean Ethics, produces Teleology, as it is now called, by way of foundation on which to construct his moral science. And he condescends to prove the reality of final causes by what I should be inclined to call an invincible demonstration; though he does it parenthetically, as if to exhibit his just scorn of the sceptics.

I say, then,—for as reason accidentally convinces us, so the experience of facts confirms us in our judgment,—that an intelligent artificer makes what he makes with a purpose or object. But that purpose of the maker is the end of that which is made. For the intention of the fashioner is the end of the thing fashioned. And a wise and prudent artificer will produce his work for an object becoming himself, and becoming the work which he has brought into being. If this be so, then it must be verified in an infinitely perfect way by that great Creator, Whose Wisdom and Prudence are unlimited. But

that nothing created will satisfy the longings of the created will is proved by a prior demonstration and the no less cogent testimony of universal experience. For—not to mention the indefinite, I might almost call it infinite, longing of the human heart for something beyond what it has already attained,—I am safe in affirming that the sovereign good of man must be sufficient of itself to answer all his desires, must be inalienable, must be eternal. If it were not the first, man would not be perfectly happy, for his happiness would be capable of increase, and his desires would not be fulfilled. If it were not the second, he would be liable to fear, *Sed perfecta charitas foras mittit timorem* — “But perfect love casteth out fear.”* If it were not the last, immortal man would boast at most of a temporary felicity. Now such an end would be no end at all; it would be utterly unworthy of the creature. Its indefinite longings, its desire after perfect rest, its future eternity of being would have been given to it in vain. Of the whole human race we might justly say in the words of the Prophet, *Patres comederunt uvam acerbam, et dentes filiorum obstupescunt* — “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the teeth of the children are set on edge.”† It is furthermore necessary that the sovereign good of man should be endowed with these three properties, not only because otherwise man’s end would not be worthy of himself, but also because it would not be worthy of the good and wise Creator Who ordained it. For God makes nothing in vain, or without a wise purpose. Yet, as

* 1 St. John iv. 18.

† Ezekiel xviii. 2.

I take for granted, you will all agree with me that He has adorned the human soul with an immortal life, and has therefore prepared for it an immortal beatitude. But no created good is there which is not corruptible, or which at all events can fully satisfy the desires of an undying spirit. Moreover, the wise order of the universe requires as much, if I may dare say so, from the goodness of our God. For there is a universal progression of grade, and conspiracy towards unity in creation, and a consequent hierarchy of ends; which did not escape the great philosopher of antiquity. But if his God were not the end of man, a supreme duality would be established; and how then could the inspired words be accomplished, which declare that *Universa propter semetipsum operatus est Dominus*—"The Lord hath made all things for Himself"?* The same argument precisely may be applied to the moral order, which thus affords us another reason for the proposition which I am maintaining. Lastly, God made man after His own image and likeness.† This was a special gift conferred on our race. Of all the visible creation he alone directly reflected the image of his Creator, the light of His countenance; while all the rest exhibited only His traces more or less dimly. It was fitting, therefore, that, as he was made most like to God, so he should in a special and exemplary way, tend towards God as his one End, and find complete beatitude in the fruition of Him.

And this man does in a twofold way which manifests most clearly the Divine resemblance. For,

* Prov. xvi. 4.

† Gen. i. 26.

as God contemplates all truth in Himself, and loves all good in Himself, and as His own Justice and Sanctity are,—to speak after the manner of men,—the one rule of His action; so man contemplates truth in God, loves all goodness in God, and the Divine Justice and Sanctity are the supreme law of his actions. And, to this end, God's Justice and Sanctity as partially revealed in the natural law, are imprinted, so to say, on the human heart, according to those words of the Psalmist, *Signatum est super nos lumen Vultus tui, Domine*—"The light of Thy countenance has been stamped upon us, O Lord."* As, then, the free-will of man is a part of the Divine likeness in his soul, so does he use that free-will after the manner of God. For as God has made all creatures for His own greater glory and as a manifestation of His Love and Bounteousness; so man uses, or ought to use, all creatures for God's glory, and by such course of action, gives back to God in love the gifts of God's love. Thus the right order requires that in all things he should tend towards God during his earthly passage; and his duty on earth becomes his beatitude in heaven with this exception, that tendency here is exchanged for fruition there.

The same truth, viz., that God is the sovereign End of the created will, is further confirmed from the consideration of those natural tendencies which are inherent in our common nature, and from the universal experience of mankind as regards the attainment of those subordinate ends which corre-

* Psal'm iv. 7.

spond to those tendencies of our nature. For created goods are manifold, and specifically differ one from another. Some goods are sensible, others intellectual, others moral, others esthetic, others again simply corporal. Yet they agree in this that they are ends to some tendency or other of our complex nature. Now, if we take them separately, our own experience and the common voice alike bear witness that their possession does not satisfy our nature as a whole. I mean by nature in any given case the principle by which a being tends towards its proper end. Admitting, therefore, as we must do, the existence of such dissatisfaction, it is plain that created goods are not, taken separately, man's appointed end. But what is to be said of them collectively? I answer by putting another question: How are we to assume them collectively? If we understand a mere arithmetical collection, there is no order, no unity, but disorder and confusion. If we take them collectively as disposed in degrees of excellence and according to the dignity of the faculty which tends towards each, there will still be a combat of tendencies, and a consequent slaughter of many ends. But take them collectively *as* goods; consider them as one, because goodness of some sort is in all, reduce them to one supreme Good,—you are right indeed, but you have,—if I may dare use the expression,—transformed them into God. For all their goodness is from Him as their Exemplary and first Efficient Cause; and no one of them is there, whose goodness and fitness do not find their prototype in the Divine Goodness.

There is yet one other reason why God should be the sovereign end of the created will. For it must, I think, be acknowledged that there is a sort of infinity in the desire of the human heart. No sooner has it attained the possession of one object, than it gets satiated with what it has, and aspires after something else or something more. No amount of earthly prosperity or earthly pleasure or human fame will satisfy it. It gets wearied with its own victories. It cries out by force of its very listlessness and disappointment, "These are not my end." But God alone is infinite, and infinitely good. All the ages of eternity will not suffice for nearing the depths of that fathomless Ocean of Goodness, even should the combined efforts of every created will assay the task. Here, then, and here alone, can man find complete satisfaction. Here is continual newness. Love as much as you can, there will be always something fresh to love. Go onward as far as you can; there will always be something more. Yes, He will still be above, beneath, around you. Do your best, you can never find out the Almighty One,—our good and gracious God,—to perfection. End worthy of the Creator, worthy of the creature! Pleasures of earth fade off in the autumn of their years;—the early affections of the heart get blighted, or death robs them of their chosen object;—the selfishness, pomposity, narrow-mindedness, and petty private ambitions of those who surround us, rob human friendship of the bright colours which arrested the eye of youthful inexperience,—pursuit of knowledge becomes a burden with the growth of time;—

the applause of men looks very small when we stand beside an open grave;—even the pure delights of nature lose their power of attraction in the chill and decay of declining life. There is nothing that lasts, nothing that is unchanging save God, our God. He is in time what He will be, only in an ineffably more glorious way, throughout an eternity of bliss. He alone will never fail us; He alone will be to us immeasurably more than we can dare to anticipate. Nothing else will serve. Such is the unisonous voice of history and of human experience. Our common nature cries aloud in the memorable words of the great Doctor of grace, *Irrequietum cor nostrum, Domine, irrequietum cor nostrum, donec requiescat in Te*—"Our heart is restless, O Lord, our heart is restless, till it finds its rest in Thee."

These thoughts, which have occupied us so long, devout brethren, elevate us once again to the Presence of our great God, in like manner as our former consideration of Truth placed us prostrate before the Throne of His incomprehensible Glory. It was on that occasion that we contemplated with awe and reverence the eternal generation of the only-begotten Son from the omniscient Father. Let us pause awhile this afternoon, ere we end our consoling meditation, in order to realize, as best we can, that other great mystery of the Blessed Trinity, which is, as it were, the Divine coronation of the truths which have formed the subject of our present conference. From the everlasting of God's unchangeable life, from the eternal generation of the Word, the Father sees in His Son the express Image of His

Person,—the Brightness of His Glory,—the unspotted Mirror of His Majesty,—the Likeness of His Goodness,*—that substantial Word Who adequately expresses within His own adorable Being the full riches of the Father's Wisdom,—and, seeing, loves that Image, that Likeness, that Mirror, the Word, His co-equal Son, with an infinite act of Love. The Son, in turn, contemplating the infinite Ocean of Goodness and Wisdom in the Father Who begat Him, loves His Father with an infinite act of Love. And that act is the same in the Father and the Son. For It is that one, most simple, vital Act, which is God. But the Term of that Act,—that living communication, infinitely perfect, incomprehensible,—by which the mutual Love of the Father and the Son is terminated, by which the Father pours out His love on the Son and the Son on the Father,—is the Holy Ghost. He is therefore called by the Fathers of the Church the Complement of the Blessed and Adorable Trinity; for the Three Persons are completed in Love. He is Third in Order. For Procession by the Intellect precedes in order Procession by the Will. And He proceeds, but is not generated. For the inner Word is conceived; but Love goes out of itself towards Its one object. Love, therefore, may be said to be the Fulfilment of the Blessed Trinity. And this gives a deeper meaning to the memorable words of the Apostle, that "God is Love." Ineffable Mystery! so consonant to human thought, yet infinitely higher than created thought can reach!

* See Hebrews i. 3 and Wisdom vii. 26.

Let us remember, my dear brethren, that as Love is the Complement of the Three Divine Persons, so likewise for us "Love is the fulfilling of the law."* This gives a sacramental efficacy to acts of charity and of contrition which some of us, perchance, have not as yet sufficiently valued or considered. If we want to form in ourselves a habit of the love of God, correlative with that supernatural habit implanted in us by Baptism and nurtured by the Sacraments ;—a habit founded in the latter as its one origin, but growing, like other habits, by repetition of corresponding acts,—we must make much in our daily prayers of these exercises of the love of God. They are easy ; for they need only the grace of God which is ours, and the decision of the will, which is always in our power. Let us, then, strive thus at least to grow in love ; for such an exercise makes all difficulties easy. It brings us nearer to the Heart of Jesus, makes us more like to our dearest Mother Mary, excites the special interest of St. Joseph in our regard, and establishes within us a new likeness to our good God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

* Rom. xiii. 10.

SERMON IV.

GOD THE SOLE BASIS OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

PSALM cxviii. 102, 142.

*A judiciis tuis non declinavi: quia tu legem posuisti mihi. . . .
Justitia tua, justitia in æternum: et lex tua veritas.*

I have not wandered off from Thy judgments: because Thou hast set a law before me. . . . Thy justice is justice for ever: and Thy law is the truth.

I PROPOSE, my dear brethren, this afternoon to consider the nature and principles of Moral Philosophy. Nor will this be subject of surprise, when it is understood that such Philosophy is supremely directive of all education worthy of the name. Yet so, of a truth, it is. For it is the province of Ethics to determine all that concerns the perfectibility of man in the natural order, and the constituents of his actual perfection or beatitude within the limits of the same order. It examines, therefore, into the nature and attributes of the end set before him, which is the term of that beatitude,—into the means at once necessary and sufficient, for the attainment of that end,—the impediments which hinder his progress towards it,—the due training of the will,—the subjugation of the passions, imagination, and affections,—

the reduction of all the complex elements of his spiritual nature to a moral harmony.

This brief survey of the great questions of which ethical science particularly treats is enough to convince you that the main object of its investigation, so far as the human faculties are concerned, is the will,—that mainspring of action which determines the character of man for good or evil, whether in his individual, family, or civic relations. And thus in its widest expression it embraces not only Ethics properly so called, but Economics, and the Political Science as well. While then it is plain that there is an intimate connection between Moral Philosophy and the true principles of education, I think you will also perceive that the subject which I am now about to consider forms a necessary sequel to the preceding lecture, in which our good God was evinced to be the supreme Good, or End, not only to His own, but also to every created will.

Nor let it for one moment be imagined that our present inquiry is purely speculative, and of no practical importance. For, while I should certainly demur to the supposition implied in such an objection, viz., the supposition that speculative truths are of themselves not worth the labour of acquisition, and are only important in so far forth as they can be carried to account, yet I hope to be able to convince you in the sequel, that the maltreatment of Ethical Philosophy by the men of this generation is helping,—and that too with considerable success,—to turn the world upside-down.

Lest there should be any mistake arising from

the course which it is my purpose to pursue, it behoves me to add that, in the *main* argument of this as of the preceding lectures, I have purposely abstained from any direct, or at least prominent, reference to the supernatural truths of Divine Revelation. I have been dealing heretofore with Natural Theology for the most part, as I now intend to do with Natural Ethics. And this will afford no real matter for regret, if we bear in mind that we are considering the infidel philosophy of the day in its bearings on human thought and human action, and are therefore bound to take up our position, as it were, on neutral ground; and if we also reflect that the supernatural is not destructive of, but supplemental to the natural,—that the Dogmatic Theology of the Church embraces, and sanctions all the truths of Natural Theology,—and that her Moral Theology accepts and has adopted as its own the great truths of Natural Ethics, nay, even the scientific evolution of those truths as handed down to us by the great philosopher of Pagan times.

It is my purpose, then, on the present occasion to show you that God is the sole foundation on which it is possible to rear the structure of Moral Philosophy. If He is excluded from the domain of Ethics, nothing is left but chaos and ruin.

To assist you in arriving at this conclusion, I lay down as an indisputable fact that there are certain things prerequisite on the part of the *object*, others on the part of the *subject* of Ethics, if there be such a thing as morality at all, and consequently the elements necessary for the existence and constitution of Moral

Philosophy. For morality, in the only true sense of the word, is impossible, unless man has an appointed end, in the possession of which he finds his perfection and beatitude. Morality is also practically impossible in the actual order, unless a man is subject to a law, and therefore to a lawgiver. So much for the objective prerequisites. As for man, who is the subject of moral education, it is absolutely necessary that he should possess free-will, as also the proximate capacity of attaining his end by his own choice. But these elements are severally impossible, apart from God. Consequently, there can be no moral philosophy where God is shut out of sight. Our modern philosophers therefore have been compelled, by the logical exigencies of their Atheism or of their Scepticism, to deny, now one, now another of these foundations of Ethics, till they have left nothing of the science but the name.

This is the course of thought which I purpose to develope to-day, and to which, my Christian hearers, I invite your serious attention. It would be as well to forewarn you that I shall not follow the order of division which, for the sake of conciseness, I have just adopted, but shall treat of the several prerequisites already enumerated according to their natural place in the logical evolution of my subject.

I. I proceed then at once to show you the absolute necessity of these objective and subjective realities, if there is to be such a thing as human morality, and to offer sundry proofs of their existence. And it is natural that I should begin with the freedom of the will. For where are we, if our will

and its actions be not free? It would be in vain for us to discuss the questions which regard the existence of the rest, if this first and most essential point should be kept in doubt. The former depend,—if not for their existence, yet in any case for their specific nature,—on the latter. We should be wasting our time were we to set about determining the particular end for which man was created, if its attainment did not depend upon himself. At the best it would be a merely speculative inquiry; and, as such, could have no place in moral philosophy. In the same way it would be idle to set before us the problem as to the possibility of our attaining the appointed end, if its attainment or non-attainment in no wise depended on our own choice and voluntary exertion. There would, in like manner, be an absurdity in our talking about law properly so called; for the idea of law connotes the free-will of the subjects of its influence. I say then that the truth of the liberty of the human will lies at the root of the whole question; and consequently claims the first place in our careful consideration.

Is it not strange, my brethren, that, after the lapse of six thousand historic years, we should be called upon, in an age which boasts of its illumination, to defend the existence and reality of this faculty of the human soul, which, after the intellect, is the noblest, and most spiritual of our natural gifts, and, conjointly with the former, exhibits that image and likeness of God in which we were created? Yet so it is. No marvel, then, that Ethical Science should be excluded from the index of philosophy,

and be treated as a mere figment of logical ingenuity. For morality,—and therefore, of course, the science of morality—includes in its essential nature the responsibility and accountability of man. Otherwise, what need would there be of any inquiry into the formation of the practical intellect, or into the characteristics of the habit of prudence, into the respective influence of praise and blame on the formation of moral habits? What need, again, of such careful analysis of the attributes peculiar to the solidly good and prudent, the continent, the incontinent, the obstinately bad, with suggestions and rules for attaining the one, and avoiding the other? What need, once more, of that studious inquiry into the nature and divisions of justice, the principles and laws of commutative, as well as those of retributive justice? All these would be idle questions, without meaning, without life, if man were not responsible, were not accountable for his actions. Who would dream of applying praise or blame to a plant, or of attempting to teach an animal the principles of equity, or of dividing the individuals included under either category, into prudent, continent, incontinent, obstinately wicked? The very idea is preposterous; and I think that it is unnecessary to waste your time, my brethren, by any elaborate elucidation of a truth which is so patent to common sense.

But if man is accountable or responsible, his will must be free. This is, as it seems to me, a conclusion so evident that it does not need, any more than the former proposition, the labour of formal proof. What man in his senses would dream of making a stone

responsible for the wound on his head, or the rose-tree responsible for the thorn in his thumb, or a cat responsible for some painful scratch on hand or face? We should think the man mad who would venture on such a paradox. And why? Is it not because we know full well, and are firmly convinced, that neither stone, nor plant, nor brute, has free-will, and is therefore not responsible for its actions.

I will offer another proof (if it be not a work of supererogation), for my assertion that the existence of free-will is necessary to the possibility of ethical science; and I derive it from the doctrine of intention. We all know full well what an important place this doctrine holds, not only in Catholic devotion, but in the constitution and definition of moral action. One and the same material act may range itself now under one virtue, now under another, and now again under another, according to the purpose or intention which directs us at the time. Nay, what is more, the same action may become either good or bad by virtue of that same influx which is constitutive of its formal character. I will say nothing of that intimate connection with the end, which is intimated by the proverbial saying that "what is first in intention is last in execution;" for this will occupy us later on. It is sufficient for us at present that the intention, more than anything else, determines the nature of a moral action.

Now an intention exhibits a twofold element. It includes a judgment or determination of the intellect, and an election of the will. If, for instance, I abstain from visiting a certain place, I may do so because

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it does not suit me at the time, or because I have a strong aversion to the persons who live there, or because my parents have forbidden it. It is quite possible that these three motives may be equally present to my consciousness. Reason tells me that the first two reasons are not only insufficient, but intrinsically unworthy; while the last is praiseworthy. My will chooses that, and *intends* not to go, because of the parental prohibition. But such an intention could assume nothing of a moral complexion, if the will were not free. For it could not derive any excellence or foundation for praise from the action of the intellect, nor, supposing the hypothesis in question to be true, from the action of the will; therefore, as the whole action would be morally wanting in its constituents, so must it likewise be in itself, because it is essentially composed of them; and no one ever knew of two negatives making a positive. In fact the action would not vary in its nature, whether it was elicited under the influence of this or that motive, or of no motive at all. Without free-will, then, the doctrine of intention would be useless; a moral philosophy impossible.

I must conclude my proof with another argument, not for the sake of giving further strength to what is in itself so plain, but because the burthen of the argument is of importance in itself to a right understanding of Moral Philosophy, and because it has so intimate a relation with the next subject which will be submitted to your consideration. The fundamental principle which lies at the root of Ethical Science has been enounced in these words: *Follow*

the right order. As such it has been accepted by most moralists worthy of the name. Now I notice, first of all, that its form is imperative, and assumes at once the appearance of a law. Its appeal is *directly* to the will, though, it is true, it appeals indirectly to the intellect. For *order* is essentially an intellectual unity, and demands an intellect for its construction no less than for its recognition; and, when the subject of such order, whatever it may be, conspires to its evolution, it is of all necessity that he should possess an intellect capable of conceiving it. But—to return to my main argument—if an appeal is made directly to the will, such provocation presupposes the freedom of the will appealed to. We should never think of giving a command or rule to stones, plants, animals; for if we did, we should be justly liable to the ridicule with which Canute treated his obsequious courtiers, when in bitter mockery he feigned an interference with the orderly pulsations of the mighty deep. It is further observable that this great principle speaks of a *right*, thereby implying the necessity of a *wrong* order; and its imperative form suggests that man is capable of following a wrong order, just as he is advised or commanded to follow the right. He therefore is supposed to have a choice; if he had not, the command, the distinction of order, would be futile and unreasonable. But if he can choose, he must necessarily have free-will. Therefore Ethical Science would be impossible, if the will were not free.

And in fact, my brethren, if the will of man were not free, if he had no liberty of choice, in what

would he differ morally from plant or beast? As it seems to me, his position would be even worse than theirs. For he would understand his end, and the right order for the attainment of that end, by virtue of his reason; and yet would be unable to tend towards that end, or to near it save by external propulsion; or to avoid disorder and avulsion from his end, if, by some fortuitous concourse of forces, he should receive an unfriendly impulsion from without. He would in fact be very much in the condition described by the poet,

Beholding heaven, but feeling hell.

His actions would be inevitable as are the phenomena of nature, alterable only by the direct intervention of God; the eye of the intellect would be set upon limitless goodness, while the will, strait-jacketed by the malice of nature, could only dash itself against the cell of an inexorable fate. There could therefore be no question of merit or demerit. Man could no more be praised or blamed for what he may do than a fossil or a fungus; and if terms of praise or blame were to be used concerning him, it could only be in that tropical sense in which they are applied to animals or, in the folly of human irritation, to things inanimate.

However, it is consoling to reflect that the liberty of the human will rests upon an incontrovertible basis. For the universal voice and common sense of mankind bear witness to its truth. The poetry, the history, the philosophy of all ages,—the codes and customs of kingdoms,—the penalties inflicted by

law,—the praise of good or heroic actions, the blame pronounced on crime and wickedness,—the education of children by precept, reward, and punishment,—the principles of internal right,—the existence of courts of equity,—the universality of some sort of religious worship and belief,—all these conspire to teach us the vital truth of the responsibility of man and of the freedom of his will. If any one shall venture to deny it, he must be prepared to erase nearly half the words from the dictionary of every language under heaven. For who could consistently use such words as *duty, obligation, intention, responsibility, virtue, right, justice, law, retribution, lie, compulsion, jurisdiction, evil, noble, possession, testament, gift, pledge, worship, obedience, ruler, election, vote, counsellor, council, judge, sensuality, incontinence*, and a multitude of other words with their many derivatives, too long to enumerate, if man has no more liberty of choice than beast, plant, or brute matter? Yet what is language, in those elements of it which are universal and common to the various tongues into which human speech is divided, but the expression of a universal idea, the voice of nature, and therefore the voice of Truth?

Yet again: I confidently make my appeal to the testimony of conscience,—of that inner voice which either accuses or defends us, as St. Paul says, according as we do evil or adhere to that which is lawful and right.* As Tertullian appeals to the natural instinct, so to speak, of the human soul in confirmation of Theism—of the belief in one God;—

* Rom. ii. 15.

because, as he says, in the time of tribulation or danger she instinctively utters her prayers before One, the Loving and Omnipotent; so in like manner do I summon the universal conscience as an infallible witness in proof of the liberty of the human will. Why is it, I ask, that our conscience pricks us when we do evil, and fills us with a glow of consolation when we have acted well and nobly, if our actions are ruled by an inexorable law external to ourselves, which leaves us no liberty of choice? Has a stone any qualms of remorse when, by the compulsion of extraneous force, it violates the law of gravitation? And is that feeling changed to one of satisfaction and delight, when, the strange impulse having spent its strength, the stone yields at length to the ordinary law and falls to the bosom of the earth? Does the pig feel guilty when it perseveres in going against the drover's will, or is it heroically glad when it runs along quietly to the martyrdom of the slaughter-house? There seems to be something like caricature in the mere proposition of such questions. Yet why so? I will tell you. It is because we are convinced that neither stone nor pig has free-will, and that therefore neither the one nor the other can have a conscience.

Once more: individual experience,—the self-consciousness of each one,—assures us with the certainty of intuition that our will is free. There is not a man who has ever lived, that has not been conscious of a capacity to choose in certain actions with a perfect liberty of election. All of us are practically cognizant of this power by the very fact

that we deliberate and, deliberating, at length form our decision and act according to its dictate. Our consciousness, which accompanies every motion of the soul, intues the deliberation, and the choice suspended during the deliberation. It likewise intues the subsequent determination, and perceives the vital difference between the state of the will before and after. It assures us that the will was free before, and is only not free now, because it is self-determined.

But a serious difficulty has been brought against the cogency of this proof. For it is admitted by all philosophers that consciousness cannot take cognizance of a mere faculty. It can only perceive the faculty in its act. Now the will is either purely potential, or it has developed into act. If it be purely potential, the eye of consciousness cannot reach it; if it has developed into act, the choice has been made and there can therefore be no longer any traces of free-will. In no case, then, can self-consciousness bear witness to human liberty.

Those who have brought forward this difficulty seem to forget that there are more acts of the will than one. Let us examine the various conditions of the will from the beginning to its final act. At first it is purely potential, facultative. No object has as yet, we may suppose, been presented before it; it is therefore simply quiescent. But now it sees, to speak loosely, an object of desire, as for instance an apple on a neighbour's tree. To speak more accurately, the senses perceive the apple, and the desire is thereupon excited to possess and enjoy it. The will begins to be moved by this concupiscence. It is drawn towards

the object. And now it is in what the schools have called its *first act* (*actus primus*). It is moved; it has not chosen. It deliberates. The practical intellect sets before it the law of justice which would be violated by the theft, and the necessity of repressing an illegal appetite. It chooses not to take the fruit, and the election is made. It is now in its *second act* (*actus secundus*). My answer then to the difficulty is this, that consciousness does not perceive the liberty of the human will in the faculty or in the second act apart and by itself; but it sees it in the first act and in the contrast between that act and the second or complete one.

Having thus disposed of a difficulty which has excited more attention than it is worth, I now proceed to the consideration of another prerequisite, necessary for the construction of Moral Philosophy. I might indeed dignify it with a higher title; for it is not only a prerequisite, it is, as Aristotle teaches us in his ethical treatises, the *foundation* of moral science. Need I say that I allude to the *end*, towards the attainment of which man must direct all his actions, in the attainment of which he can alone find his perfection or beatitude, and for the attainment of which he was originally created?

I say, then, that the reality of an end towards which all the thoughts, words, actions, of man conspire, and in which they all culminate, is of absolute necessity, if we would fain construct a moral philosophy. For our activity must not be wild and random. No such anarchy is admissible even in the evolution and energy of things inanimate,

or in the progress and tendency of unreasoning life. For if these were to go off at sixes and sevens,—if there were no fixed law by direction of which their nature developes into act, and in consequence an end towards which they are propelled independently of any will of their own,—if they assumed in their involuntary action, an independence of the universal order,—if they were mere patches, so to say, of a disorderly counterpane, which, for want of a word adapted to express the chaos, we may call the phantasies of nature,—where should we be? What barrier would there be against the tyranny of brute force or muscular superiority, and the anarchy of chance? But He, Who fashioned them, has “made all things in order and measure,”* and “has appointed them their bounds which they cannot overpass.”† And if this be true of the lower ranges of creation, how much more thoroughly is it realized in man—the great handiwork of God! The truth of my proposition is made more apparent when we consider that fundamental principle of Ethical Science, on which I have already insisted. We are told to follow the right order; but how can we follow the right order if there be no end towards which our actions are bound to converge? To adopt the metaphor of the great Stagyrte, we are archers in the battle of life. Our energies, more especially the intellect and will, are the bow; our acts are the arrows; but how can we shoot, if we are forbidden a target? And even if we have a target, but we cannot see it, know it, where will there be room for archery? In like manner, if

* Wisdom xi. 21.

† Job xiv. 5.

man has no end or, possessing one, he cannot get to know it, at one fell swoop the possibility of moral action is destroyed ; and intellect and will are toys to play with, not instruments of progress and perfection. Human life would, at the best, become a game of blindman's buff, over which mere luck would have a universal dominion ; and the anthem of God's intellectual creation, if indeed any music were left to it, would resemble the fitful breathings of an Eolian harp, rather than the scientific concert of a spiritual symphony.

If we glance at the nature of man, the necessity of an end receives further confirmation. For,—as Butler has pointed out with that philosophical penetration for which he was so remarkable,—the human soul is possessed of a complex array of faculties, which are not autonomous, not left to the inevitable conflict of their divergent propensities. On the contrary they constitute a marvellous *cosmos*, or order, in the subordination of some, in the superior authority of others, and in the subjection of the rest to that intellect, which is queen in the psychical commonwealth. The intellect legislates, the will is her executive. It is plain, then, that the end which reason recognizes as such, will be the appointed end of all the other faculties. These may have each its peculiar end towards which it tends ; but such ends, like the faculties of which they are the ends, must never claim equality with, but must ever be subservient to, the end which reason has acknowledged for her own. If this be so, then moral action is impracticable, and Ethics a nonentity, if there be

no end appointed to man, or if that end be beyond the grasp of his intellectual power.

Again, if we are to trust to the dictates of common sense, man is evidently destined for something which at present is not his. Why, otherwise, do we all experience from time to time those yearnings, those longings of heart after some indefinite good, as it seems to us at the time, which nevertheless we never reach? Why is it, again, that we cannot discover complete satisfaction in any of those delights which the world can offer? Man gains wealth; he perpetually desires after more. He plunges into sensual pleasures; his appetite is soon cloyed. He labours after fame and high place; he soon gets tired of both. And, at last, when he comes to die, if he has not learned the lesson sooner, he realizes the truth of those words of the inspired Preacher, *Vanitas vanitatum, vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas*—"Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, and all things are vanity."* Surely these facts of daily experience are amply sufficient to convince us that man has a natural and invincible desire after some good which nothing created has yet supplied, or ever can supply. Yet, unless blind chance rules over all, he is intended to be perfect, he is made to enjoy a beatitude. The very nobility of his nature demands such consummation. If then the morality of his actions consists, as it does, in his following the guidance of his nature, and the nature of man, as of everything else, is—to adopt a scholastic definition,—the principle by which he tends towards his appointed

* Eccles. i. 2.

end, it follows that such end, and the cognition of it, are not only necessary to morals, but that they are of paramount importance in the great battle of life.

The whole effort of nature, whether animate or inanimate, is directed to the attainment of unity. Even the new vocabulary of physical science bears unconscious witness to the fact. Search to the bottom the meaning of such phrases as *selection*, *evolution*, *development*, *pangenesis*, *reversion*, *correlated* or *concomitant variations*, *homology*, and others, like these which I have taken from physiology, to be found in its sister disciplines, and you will by careful test precipitate this truth. Nay more; the very construction of the physical sciences,—their classifications, their genera, species, orders, families, classes,—their experimental laws,—their hypotheses or theories, however unfounded they may be,—all conspire in bearing testimony to the unific tendencies of nature. Nor will you find within her large domain any constitution of independent republics. She is *wheel within wheel complete*;—a perfect piece of mechanism instinct with life. Part fits to part; one order of being subserves another. Some are in higher, others in lower place; but in their several functions and activities they conspire towards the production of one universal whole—the unity of perfection. But there can be no oneness of tendency if there exist no unity of end. There must be one common focus towards which the rays of light converge. If there be one aim, there must be one target. There must, therefore, be one end towards which the whole creation travels. But the knowledge

of that end is a stern necessity to man. For he it is who has the power, and consequently the obligation, of guiding the unintelligent creatures towards their end by that use of them and empire over them, which have been conceded to his free-will. He it is who is appointed to tune the visible universe for the production of its unisonous anthem ; he it is who alone has the power of introducing discord into its psalm of praise. It is plain, then, that there must be one end of created things, and that it is of the greatest importance for man to know that end, in order that he may be able to guide what is thus left in great measure to his charge towards the goal of universal aspiration. The ethical importance of this truth commends itself more forcibly to our judgment, when we reflect that no small part of morality depends on our right use of the creatures which surround us.

Yet again : I revert to an authority which cannot be too often insisted upon in an age which has practically rejected it, though its guidance would have saved modern thought from a multitude of sophistical and shallow theories by which, for want of such guidance, it is in many places, and notably in England, detained from the acquisition of truth. The authority of which I speak is commended as follows by an illustrious writer and philosopher of the Anglican Establishment — “The general and perpetual voice of men is as the sentence of God Himself. For that which all men have at all times learned, Nature herself must needs have taught, and God being the Author of nature, her voice is but

His instrument. By her, from Him, we receive whatsoever in such sort we learn." And, in saying this, Hooker has only followed in the footsteps of Aristotle, whose *dictum* he has Christianized. But the universal voice of mankind in every age,—the action of the prudent,—the teaching of the wise and good,—alike agree in insisting upon the existence of an end "at which all things aim,"* and in the possession of which all things attain to their perfection.

If this be so,—if there be one supreme end towards which human action should be ever tending, then the existence of that end must be a supreme principle in Ethics, and its nature the first question of Moral Philosophy. It is of all necessity for us that we should know the *whither* of our actions; otherwise we should be like men at sea without a compass, nay, without a polar-star of guidance.

That man must be provided with the necessary means for the attainment of his end is a truth so self-evident that it might seem superfluous to have called attention to it. To allow that there is such a constituted end and then to deny the possibility of its actual attainment, seems very like a contradiction in terms. I have nevertheless included this prerequisite in my catalogue with a special object. For though I have purposely excluded in these conferences direct reference to the supernatural order, yet it is impossible for us, my brethren, who believe in it, altogether to exclude so important an element of ethical consideration. Now it is a

* ὅτι πάντα ἐφίεται (Nic. Ethics, i., 1).

fundamental truth of Christianity that a supernatural end has been given us which, by reason of its excellence, is utterly disproportioned to the exigencies of our nature. Neither intellect, nor will, nor both together, even if you add to them all the other faculties of which we boast, could ever move a single step, unaided, towards that end. It follows, therefore, that the necessary means must be given us. But such a conclusion virtually contains within itself the whole doctrine of inherent grace, and, I might say, of the Incarnation likewise. Let this much suffice.

I now proceed to the consideration of law, which is the last in my list of prerequisites. If we duly consider the nature of man's spiritual constitution, and if at the same time we take into account the other prerequisites whose existence and necessity have been already pointed out, it will be seen at once, I imagine, that man must have a rule of moral order, supposing Ethical Science to be anything better than a form of words. For, as we have seen, man's will is free. He can act rightly just as well as he can act wrongly. If so, there must be a right and a wrong; and a right and a wrong which is not of his own constitution. To affirm that man is a supreme law to himself—that his private judgment can alone describe the circumference of his duty,—that all public law is merely conventional and its sole measure, utility—is tantamount to the destruction of all morality, and of that specific difference which universal consent has attributed to human actions. Such a doctrine would justify me,

as a Chinese, in promoting infanticide,—as a Hindoo, in committing suicide beneath the car of Juggernaut, —as a cannibal, in feasting on human slaughter. Inherent rights would inevitably perish, or rather they could never have existed. Crime would resolve itself into a problem of expediency. *Reprobation of evil deeds*, as an obsolete term, would have to be obliterated out of human speech; for the very words, *reprobation* and *evil*, would have become idle sounds without life or significancy. No wonder that the illuminism of this wonderful age should at the same time pour out on beasts the copious streams of its mercy, and imprison the unfortunate author of an incautious blow, while it protests with all its might against a Divine ordering approved by the all but universal wisdom of the past, that “whosoever shall shed man’s blood, his blood shall be shed : for man was made in the image of God.”* The fact is that mawkishness has taken the place of reason, and morality has become the mere plaything of the *dilet-tante*. Men have cast out of doors the objective and unchanging ; and as truth has come to mean what a man *troweth*, so duty must be made to stand for what a man *doeth*. And, if voices of wisdom, echoes of the past, would fain essay to check this headlong rush to chaos, the air resounds with denunciations against conservatism or regression ; with a justice like to his, who, standing on the outermost verge of a precipice and one foot out into space, should raise an outcry against the friend whose rough grasp has hurried him back to a road of safety and of life.

* Gen. ix. 6.

If, then, there is such a thing as morality,—if there be an objective standard of right and wrong,—and if man be free to act as he pleases, he must have a law in the strict and specific meaning of the term. It is, therefore, of the highest importance that we should clearly understand what law is, what are its constituents, its properties, its effects. I am not speaking of that generic signification of the word which applies to every *rule by which the operations of things are determined*, though such a rule necessarily involves within itself the idea of a ruler. My object at present is to direct your attention to *moral law*, which has been defined to be *an ordering of reason for the common good, promulgated by him who has charge of the community*. I know that objections may be made to this definition as including precisely what is in dispute. But I need hardly call your attention, dear brethren, to the fact that my aim has been throughout, not to confute the neoteric theories by which we are surrounded, but to establish the true philosophy which is their only antidote ; and I conceive that, with this end in view, I cannot do better than give you a definition of law that has, in substance at least, been generally and for many ages received and adopted.

Law, thus understood, may be considered in three ways. For it may be regarded, first of all, as *essentially* in the legislator. The *truth* of the law is in his intellect, the *force* of the law is in his will ; and these two in unison constitute its objective reality. Then, again, it may be considered as existing *by participation* in the subject,—the person

or persons governed. In order that it may have such a participative existence, it is necessary that the law should be present as law in the intellect of the subject; and in this knowledge consists its promulgation passively understood. It is no less necessary that the will of the subject should be capable of observing, of obeying it. Lastly, it may be considered *symbolically*, as it exists in some outward sign, whether of voice or material instrument. The essential effect of law is *obligation*, which may be described as "*a moral necessity imposed upon the will by a superior, and which arises from the necessary connection of means with the necessary end*;" for this is the essential idea of obligation in its ultimate analysis.

It follows from what I have just said that law is not moral philosophy, though moral philosophy is occupied with law. For Ethic, as being a discipline, is speculative and is direct object of the intellect; while law formally and principally regards the will and the due direction of its activities. Law, again, differs from counsel; for counsel does not essentially include the idea of a superior, while law does; and the former has no obligatory force, which the latter of its very nature possesses. Law, lastly, differs from a request; and for the same reasons.

The analysis of the nature and properties of law, which I have instituted, involves a great deal that is of the highest import, so far as regards the subject of the present conference. You will see at once, devout brethren, why I have placed it last in my catalogue of prerequisites to the formation of Moral Science. For it presupposes free-will, the existence

of a supreme end, and the possession by man of means necessary for the attainment of such end. But there is much more which is worthy of the most attentive consideration.

I wish to call your especial attention to the fact that moral law,—any law which affects the actions of man,—essentially connotes a legislator. Now a legislator, if he be truly such, is one who has wisdom to judge of the right means for the attainment of the right end, and authority and power to enforce that judgment on the will of the governed. He is therefore endowed with intellect and with free-will. A legislator cannot be an abstraction. Neither fate, nor chance, nor necessity can occupy his place. Law cannot supplant him, any more than an effect can supply the place of its cause. For law is neither intellectual nor volitive. It is indeed the fruit of mind and free-will, and therefore of necessity presupposes them, but cannot stand for them. To speak then of law as the agent or factor of results is to substitute an abstract generalization,—or, at the best, a constant order,—for an efficient cause, and to confound unity of result with the wisdom of its designer. Neither can a philosophy or method stand us in stead of a legislator. For a scientific system is not creative, but simply deductive, is itself created, so to speak, by demonstration. It uses and synthesizes what it finds ; but it cannot summon into life its own material. It does not invent rule and moral order ; it only carries out to their legitimate conclusions the premisses of objective truth. Moreover it has no voice of command,—no power of binding

and loosing. It speculates; and leaves man, meanwhile, to the unrestricted use of his liberty of choice. It is a mere sign-post; and no Moses even can bring it down, in the shape of a table of commandment, from the holy mountain.

Neither can a mere compact of utility serve the place of law. For usefulness is a matter of taste; and that which is useful to one may be useless to another. Furthermore in the case of a community no majority has a right, though it may have the brute strength, to enforce on others what is deemed useful for itself. For the minority is not bound to sacrifice its own interest to that of others however numerous. Each man has a right, under such a hypothesis, to pursue his own path according to his lights; and any compact would therefore be a mere compact of temporary expediency, to be broken on the first real pressure of events. Such a rule would have no authority, no moral necessity, no stability. In a word, it would not be law, but mere convention.

Allow me to confirm what has been said by a consideration of the two great divisions of the law. Law is either *positive* or *natural*. The former is creative of right; the latter, declarative. The one solely depends upon the will of the legislator for its authority; the other rests secure in its own inherent right. God cannot repeal the natural law, though He may suspend its operation in a given case; for to repeal it would be to undo Himself. Furthermore, all codes of human law,—all authority of human legislation—all temporal sanction,—nay, even the positive laws of God, receive their life, and obligatory

force, and stability, from the natural law. But the natural law is universal. It rules over the whole intellectual creation. No man, however gifted or powerful, is exempt from its commanding influence. It is true that it is written in the hearts of men ; but it is not a mere speculation of the universal mind, for it has a sanction independent of us, which is revealed by the witness of conscience. It is a true law which exacts obedience,—a law, which we cannot make or unmake at our pleasure. It therefore proclaims the existence of a legislator, whose intellect and will are a rule morally coercing the free action of all created intelligence. Unless we are free to acknowledge this, we must confess that the natural law is no law at all, as we understand the term, but only a general prejudice or a politic agreement. And what must be the eventual result of such a theory? Why, you have built your house upon a shifting sand ; and when the storms come and beat upon it, it falls, and great is its fall. The natural law is the foundation ; all positive law, whether human or Divine, is the superstructure.

II. I now proceed to show you, my brethren, that these necessary conditions of morality and prerequisites of an Ethical Philosophy, essentially connote the existence and being of God ; so that, without Him, the existence of the one and the construction of the other are simply impossible. Following the order which I have adopted in what has preceded, I will begin by examining whether my assertion is verified as regards the free-will of man.

It is not necessary for me to prove to you a

principle which, until the seventeenth century, was never, so far as I know, seriously called in question, but has been ever accepted as axiomatic by men of sense and wisdom. There is no one, I feel sure, among you who doubts that every effect must have a cause. I stand, then, in presence of an effect, revealed to my self-consciousness, which is of the gravest significance. I intue the freedom of my own will in its acts, as we have already seen. Moreover I receive on universal testimony, confirmed by facts of history and experience, the truth that the liberty which I enjoy is possessed by each and all of that human family of which I am a member. I repeat that this free-choice of the created will is an *effect*, and postulates an efficient cause. It is an effect; because it is something which was not, but now is. Its existence was contingent; and even now it is only hypothetically necessary; *i.e.*, it is necessary because it *is*, though it might not have been;—in other words, it is now necessary, because a fact is a fact. But the truth is necessary, not the fact. Now everything which is not self-existing, which is not necessary life, is contingent, and therefore an effect. That which might not have been,—and, *a fortiori*, that which once was not at all,—exacts a sufficient cause of its existence; and a cause other than itself. For it is evident to every sober thinker that *nothing* cannot be the cause of being; or, in other words, that contingent being cannot constitute itself. I know that my will, like all the rest of my nature, is contingent. I know in part, in part accept on universal testimony, that all other men are in this respect like myself.

There must, then, be a cause for this effect ; and a cause, moreover, which you seek in vain among the race of men, whether you take them individually or collectively. What is that cause? I must again refer to the ancient doctrine of causality, which teaches us that every effect must be, virtually at least, precontained in its efficient cause. This is plain enough, if the adage be true that *no one gives what he has not himself got*. It follows, therefore, that the cause of which I am in search must himself be endowed with will and with freedom of will. He must, moreover, be sole and sufficient cause of all created free-will, or—if objection should be raised to the word, *created*,—let me say of contingent free-will. But such an efficient cause cannot itself be contingent ; otherwise the question recurs. It must therefore be necessary, self-existing ; but such a cause is God, and God only.

Furthermore, free-will is a spiritual faculty. For that which is not spiritual is limited to some corporeal object by which it is determined. It moreover depends on that body, and is therefore under entire subjection to any agent that has power over the whole body. But, as we have seen, the human will is self-determinable in its acts, and admits of no physical compulsion. Nor let it be objected that, according to Catholic teaching man is naturally incapable of merit in his sleep, and that therefore the freedom of the will seems to depend on material or bodily modifications. For this incapacity of merit arises, not from any suspension of liberty in the faculty, but from the absence of conditions necessary

to its exercise. If I am asked what is the primary source of this absence of conditions, I reply that it is to be traced to the fact of the intellect being, as in the case of the insane, out of focus, and no act of the will is capable of merit or demerit, over which the intellect has not shed its light. And it seems to me that this doctrine receives no small confirmation from the phenomena of dreams. For who is there who is not conscious of having repeatedly exercised his free choice in sleep, while living for the time in that world of unreality and of phantasms? I repeat, then, that for the reason I have alleged the volitive faculty is spiritual, and therefore that its efficient Cause,—that self-existent and necessary One,—must be spiritual also. Such is God, and God only.

My argument is further confirmed by an appeal to the history of philosophy and of universal literature. If I exclude scepticism under all its forms,—and how can you argue with know-nothings or professors of universal doubt?—I find, until very lately, three answers, and three answers only, to my question as to the efficient cause of the human will. One answer is, that it is all the result of an inexorable fate. I reject it because it makes of an abstraction a living, personal being, or at least a concrete reality; and because it makes what is really nothing efficient cause of something,—makes want of liberty the sufficient reason of free-will. Another answer is, that accident is universal cause. I reject it, because accident is not an objective reality, but a mere impersonation of human ignorance. For what is accident save an effect of which we cannot discover an efficient cause?

There remains one other answer; it is mine, yet not mine only. It has the voice of antiquity in its favour;—it has stood the test of time;—it has enlisted considerable names in philosophy as its champions;—it has passed again and again, during the course of ages, through the crucible of thought;—it stands its ground firmly enough to the present hour;—it is announced by the ever-recurring voice of Revelation;—that answer is, that the one great efficient Cause is God.

Well, devout brethren, I have reserved one other answer to my question till the last. And I shall introduce it to your notice by a reflection which is eminently suggestive. That new philosophy, which has gained so much attention in England and unfortunately claims as its authors or advocates men of ability and masters of style, has determined in its supposed strength to eliminate the idea of God from the cycle of knowledge. "If there be a God," say these writers, "He is the Unknowable and the Unknown." He cannot therefore solve for us the mystery of life; neither can He take His place among the accepted facts of Philosophy. But then there is this mysterious freedom of the human will. How is the phenomenon to be explained? Electricity, galvanism, magnetism, vital force,—none of these will serve our turn. Deny its existence; and the Gordian knot is cut. So we have one of these gentlemen informing the world that "a volition is a moral effect, which follows the corresponding moral causes as certainly and invariably as physical effects follow their physical causes." Hereupon we find inserted a

modest expression of doubt. "Whether it *must* do so, I acknowledge myself to be entirely ignorant, be the phenomenon moral or physical; and I condemn, accordingly, the word Necessity as applied to either case. All I know is, that it always does." You see that this eminent writer has soon forgotten his modesty of indecision. It would be interesting to know whether this last universal proposition is the result of personal induction. If it be the result of unanimous testimony,—which I can safely say it is not—he should have said, "I believe," not, "I know."

"Away then with free-will," say the hierophants of this new school, "it is a mere figment, the creation of educated prejudice and of astute priestcraft. It exists only in name." What remains? Well, the human will. But what is that? Why, a higher form of force,—an evolution of animal magnetism,—anything but a spiritual faculty. It acts like other physical, or rather material forces, and is subject to precisely the same laws; so that its existence is only the noblest form of evolution at present attained, and a special fact in the great process of natural selection. But then with the loss of free-will all morality follows in its train. These writers are prepared to accept the consequence. One of them does not scruple to write, "I am told that if I elect to murder, I am conscious that I could have elected to abstain: but am I conscious that I could have abstained if my aversion to the crime, and my dread of its consequences, had been weaker than the temptation? . . . I therefore dispute altogether that we are conscious of being able to act in opposition to the strongest present desire or

aversion. The difference between a bad and a good man is not that the latter acts in opposition to his strongest desires ; it is that his desire to do right, and his aversion to do wrong, are strong enough to overcome, and in the case of perfect virtue to silence, any other desire or aversion which may conflict with them." There is a sense, of course, in which the last sentence may claim our assent ; for habits long acquired give such strength to the will, or—what the writer calls ambiguously enough—desire, that it is *all but* incapacitated from moving in a contrary direction. But habits are the result of free-will ; and this is evidently not the meaning of the writer's words. He is therefore guilty of what looks very like a contradiction when he uses the phrase, *a bad and good man*. For, if his hypothesis be true, there can be no such things as moral goodness or moral evil. All reward and punishment are so many acts of injustice. Laws are a farce ; for they essay to act against the inevitable, and to establish an obligation where there is no liberty of choice.

It is not my purpose to confute the error, my brethren ; I merely signalize it ; because I want you to see, by evidence of facts, that the exclusion of God involves the exclusion of free-will from the sphere of knowledge, and that, these excluded, the essential elements for the constitution of a Moral Philosophy are wanting.

I now go on to affirm that, if God be excluded from the domain of Philosophy, we must necessarily reject the doctrine of final causes.

I prefer, for reasons which will be apparent to

you, dear brethren, that I should follow in the footsteps of the great philosopher of antiquity. He is the most eminent prophet of the natural revelation, as the Doctors of the Church are the most eminent exponents of the supernatural revelation; and the main basis of my argument in the present conferences has been purposely taken from the voice of natural reason. Aristotle tells us in his *Nicomachean Ethics* that there must be one universal end towards which all things tend. And he adds a reason for the statement; for, if it were otherwise, he says, the natural desire of contingent being would be an empty and vain conceit, whereas nature makes nothing in vain. But he is not content with this. He proceeds to examine into the properties or excellencies of this end. It must be an ultimate end, into which all other ends are resolvable. It must therefore be the highest and consummate end;—not, as I have noticed in a previous lecture, as being merely the highest among a hierarchy of ends, but as containing all the rest somehow in itself. Furthermore, it must be an end sufficient for itself, requiring nothing outside itself for the perfection of its own bliss, and therefore infinitely perfect; for what is there remaining which can set bounds to, or limit, its goodness? Once more, it must be inalienable, and therefore eternal. I accept the doctrine as being most evident to reason; and I affirm that if you seek this supreme Good outside of God, your search is vain. Go through the category of existing things,—elevate your regard to the vast, indefinite realm of possibles,—seek with minutest care among the things

of heaven, of earth, and of all that is under the earth,—do what you can, you will find yourself at last prostrate before the Throne of the One, great God.

My hearers, I have no need to dilate on this point in my argument, because it formed the chief burden of my preceding conference. I appeal, therefore, again to the logic of facts. Why is it that our sceptical neoterics have proclaimed war against what they are pleased to term Teleology? Is it because the doctrine of final causes is barren of practical result? Is it because, being purely speculative, it must take its place with metaphysics, and share the same fate? Has it no influence on the life of man and the issues of history? Is it a dreamy prisoner shut up in the study, forbidden to walk at large among the throngs of men? Why, its moral influence is paramount. For the end we have in view is the intention of our act. And, in moral action, the intention is the soul, the life, of operation. It is of such vital influence that it can transform a good into an evil action, and can robe what is objectively evil with the garment of merit. It alone specifies the virtue or the vice in a majority of cases; and, like a skilful musician, can, as it were with a single pressure, produce a rich chord of virtues. Is it then because the doctrine of final causes is so difficult of proof, so uncertain in its intellectual basis? Why,—to say nothing of the testimony of self-consciousness and of individual experience,—the whole world is agreed that the intention, which is the end pre-conceived by the mind, gives the whole moral colour to our actions. What, then, is it which has

excited this unreasoning onslaught on the truth of "Teleology?" Why is it cleared away from the modern platform as a bugbear of the past,—rubbish to be swept aside by the besom of intellectual radicalism? What has it done to be so treated? On what grounds have these thinkers passed a bill of attainder against it? The answer, dear brethren, is plain enough. Without a God the doctrine of final causes is a farce. The exigency of our inexorable logic carries us up to God. But He has already been curtained off. So "Teleology" too must be conveniently put out of the way. The road is now clear for the triumphs of Atheism. Yes, perhaps; but then what of Moral Philosophy meanwhile?

It will not be necessary for me to pursue my argument into the subject-matter of the third prerequisite, for this among other reasons, that it has a special relation to the supernatural order, as I have had occasion to remark before. I shall proceed at once, therefore, to a consideration of the last prerequisite, and shall endeavour to make it plain to you, beloved brethren, that, without God, law, properly so called, is an impossibility, and that consequently we should labour in vain, if without Him we would fain try to construct a system of Moral Philosophy.

I have already called your attention to the fact that any law exacts as its correlative a lawgiver, if it be truly and properly what it is understood to be. Now the foundation of all positive law whether human or Divine is, as I have said before, the natural law; and the one, fundamental principle of

the natural law is this : *keep to the right order*. There is, therefore, a moral ordering, which involves in its very concept a legitimate authority whose it is, of right, to order. But the natural law is universal. I will say nothing of its former sway over the Angelic hierarchies during their time of trial ; as I intend to confine myself to the width of its influence over human action. It is plain, then, that the natural law includes all men without exception within the sphere of its royal supremacy ; for its principles,—however much their application to given instances may have varied from time to time in the world's history,—are indelibly engraven on the mind and heart of man. They are the voice of our common nature, and, therefore, the voice of Him Who made it. But, if the law be universal, the lawgiver must have, by innate right, universal dominion over man. Suppose for one moment that it were otherwise ; law would be no law, seeing that the authority necessary for its enactment would be a simple usurpation. All law consequently postulates in ultimate analysis a legislator who can, in his own absolute right, claim to himself the universal allegiance of mankind. I seek far and wide,—I seek in the heavens above, on the earth beneath,—I seek north and south, east and west,—there is but One in Whom this right is discoverable. No mere creature can own it. In God alone can I find it.

And, be it remembered, all authority in human nature is derivative. Man, of himself, has no rights in the nature of things over his fellow man ; wherever he *de facto* possesses them,—I care not what may

have been the process of election,—he has them from above. Blot out, then, the idea of God from your book of Ethics, you have at once uprooted the foundations of all human jurisprudence. Political institutions, civil codes, courts of law, police,—if they can exist at all under your atheistic philosophy,—will only live on by virtue of a utilitarian compact. But such a life contains within itself the elements of its own speedy dissolution. It has not vigour enough to endure an outburst of popular anarchy. The ship is water-logged, and can never ride the storm of revolution. Crime would lose its objective malice, and would become the resolution of a mere equation between the possible gain and possible loss accruing to the majority ; and the tyranny of numbers would be accepted as the great, guiding principle of social life.

Law, moreover, as I have already remarked, requires an adequate sanction. Human nature is not so constituted as to accept the guidance of a mere philosophy, or to be persuaded to follow what is good in the moral order simply because of its goodness. *Virtue is its own reward*, is not a principle of sufficient efficacy to stay the current of human passions. If men could be educated by the abstract theory of sages or the logical conclusions of the moralist, there would have been less need of grace and of a supernatural revelation. But what they really want is a law with coercive power. And who is there that can give this sanction to the natural law, and so, by derivation, to all positive law, save He, that only One, Who has implanted within us

a conscience, ready to accuse us when we deviate from the path of duty, and to reward us with its satisfaction and gladness when we answer to the behests of virtue? Yes, it is only He, Who moreover has absolute dominion over life and death, and can reward with an eternal life, or punish with that terrible second death, in the ages of the future.

And what are we to say of that obligation which is the essential consequence of law? Is it possible to find in any man, or any body of men, any innate or absolute right to oblige me to a certain line of conduct? I frankly own that I am puzzled where to discover such right. I can understand the power of combination to a certain extent discoverable in motives of expediency or mutual convenience. But these are not morally coercive. For what is deemed expedient in the interest of ten thousand of my neighbours, may not be expedient for me; and I see not what can invalidate my claim to consult my own interests first. There remains therefore in ultimate resort the tyranny of a majority and an appeal to brute force. But this is not *moral* coercion, whatever else it may be. I think, then, my brethren, that you will agree with me when I say that law is impossible, if God is not to be at the head of affairs;—if His existence, claims, paramount authority, are to be ignored.

The authors of the new Philosophy, to whom I have been making repeated allusion, seem to have felt the cogency of the argument which I have just developed. They are consequently at perpetual war with the very term of *law*. They would exclude it

from all modern dictionaries, if they could ; but the common voice of mankind is too strong for them. So they use the formula under protest, and adopt the external symbol whilst they emasculate its meaning. Away with the accepted notion of law ! Away with a supreme and absolute authority ! Each man is a law unto himself ; for there is no such thing as a universal legislator. If there be One Who is over all, we know Him not, we cannot know Him. Even taking for granted the possibility of His existence, He is a very cipher in the evolution of human knowledge. Law in physical science is a name which merely expresses a certain constancy in natural phenomena,—the blind play of material forces,—if indeed we allow these phenomena or forces the advantage of an objective existence. Law in the field of politics is a human convention, dictated by mere expediency ; and, if there be any law above or beyond, it is utterly hidden in cloud, withdrawn from human cognizance, and consequently unpractical. The majority shall build their tower of Babel ; and there is no Power to cast it down in its height of pride. Such is the book of proverbs which is to supply the place of the one that Solomon has left us ; for the latter is found by experience, I suppose, to be wholly unfitted for this age of progress and enlightenment.

Well, my beloved brethren, what is,—what must be,—the fatal fruit of all these miserable sophisms ? This present generation has been promised a Moral Philosophy, which should be free from the unwholesome restraint of the Supreme God ; and the promise

has been in part fulfilled, partly is in course of fulfilment. And what is the result, so far as this mad scepticism has had its way? The broad landmarks which separate crime from virtue have been removed; all idea of accountability is smothered;—moral evil is an epidemic which is beyond human control; our actions are not ours, for they are the playthings of an inexorable fate; and, however disordered, they can be legitimately punished only as a remedial measure, and as a means of preserving the interests of the majority. Of course there is no heaven, no hell; and that electric fluid, which an obsolete philosophy has termed the human will, is equally following its natural activity, whether it issues from the murky womb of the thundercloud and upsets altars and thrones in its passage and is prodigal in its fury against the life of the children of men, or plays harmlessly in broad sheets of light athwart the calm sky of a summer eve.

Man's ethical development is burked; and that last ark of refuge for a dying civilization,—the spirit of the family,—is destroyed. The sanctity of marriage has no God to defend it in the courts of modern thought; and it must yield to the lawless demands of human passion. Parental authority is at a discount; and the boy in jacket is ready to teach his father a fresh lesson out of the Gospel of independence. Women, too, contemptuous of Apostolic order, desert their legitimate place in the great family of man, and strive, with a shameless effrontery, to unsex themselves, hiding under a masculine fancy-dress that weakness which is their strength. The

change has begun; and the family is gradually yielding up its dearest right into the hands of the State. Thus are we relapsing, after near upon two thousand years' experience of a brighter day, into the worst and most degrading errors of Paganism.

And what have we to say of political life? Can there be any stability for States and Governments in such a moral chaos? Look at the programme of our most advanced communists. They are not, remember, a small, isolated band of unpractical enthusiasts. They did their work in Paris; and they did it well; and—what is more—they are ready to do the same whenever and wherever they get a chance. And what, according to their own open profession, is their aim? The destruction of every altar, and of every throne,—the eradication of all aristocracies,—war *a l'outrance* against capital,—the subversion of marriage,—the apotheosis of manual labour,—massacre of rulers and governors, enthronement of the ruled and governed. And this is your work, you short-sighted sophists of our day. You have furnished the premisses; and the natural logic of the masses has soon found its way to the conclusion. On you rests the responsibility; you are accountable before God for all the crime and bloodshed and lawlessness of that revolution which already darkens the horizon. If you will not learn the lesson before, then at least your own calamities and the misfortunes of those who are nearest and dearest to you, will teach you that without God morality is a mere dream, the family a chimera, government an impossibility.

SERMON V.

GOD THE ONLY BEAUTIFUL AND THE FOUNDATION OF ESTHETIC.

ISAIAH xxxiii. 17.

Regem in decore suo videbunt oculi ejus.

His eyes shall see the King in His beauty.

THERE is scarcely any subject, in the natural order, which is more difficult of treatment than the one which I have chosen for this last conference. And such difficulty arises, not from any peculiar abstruseness in the object, nor from any abstract lines of thought to which its consideration gives birth postulating more than ordinary subtilty of mind,—for the matter in hand is comparatively free from these impediments,—but it owes its origin to the fact that the beautiful is of so delicate and airy a texture, so impalpable, so much more nearly allied to feeling and imagination than to reason, as to defy all attempts at definition. If we submit it to an over careful intellectual analysis, it vanishes at once ; for its special home is in the heart, not in the head.

Some there are who have said that it consists in fairness of proportion. But fairness is beauty. And

what, after all, is this fairness of proportion? The answer has been given that it is multiplicity in unity, and that this unity consists in order and symmetry. There is doubtless truth in such an explanation. Yet can we safely affirm that, wherever there is unity and proportion of parts, *there* there is beauty? Or, on the other hand, can we venture to say that, where there is no multiplicity of parts, or, if there be, such multiplicity is not directly represented in the idea, we shall seek for the beautiful in vain? If so, what becomes of the beauty of a curve, or, to take a plainer instance, the beauty of a generous action? Yet common consent has attributed to each a fairness proper to itself.

For me, my brethren, it seems a rash and hopeless task to assay the definition of that which, like the rich bloom on fruit, is liable to perish in the handling. I will therefore serve myself of a description which may fix the nature of the beautiful sufficiently for our purpose, and whose breadth of range will, I trust, secure it from censure. Let us say, then, that beauty is the sheen of goodness;*—that brightness which makes it pleasing to the eye, and gladsome to the heart.

But if beauty be the appanage of goodness, it follows as a consequence that there will be as many species of the beautiful as there are species of the good. Of course the idea primarily represents sensible beauty, (I mean primarily, so far as its

* Plato has described beauty as the brightness of the true. I prefer to say the brightness of the good; understanding goodness in its transcendental meaning.

origin is concerned); indeed the same may be said of the greater number of human ideas. But it extends to a vast range of other objects. That unerring test of truth, the general language of mankind, will sufficiently confirm what I have asserted. For if we examine the various languages which we may happen to know, paying special attention to the various objects of which beauty is predicated, we shall find that our conception of it permeates the world physical, moral, and spiritual. In fact, do we not speak of a beautiful idea,—of the beauty of maternal love,—of the beautiful simplicity of childhood,—of the beauty of an act of compassionate generosity,—of the beauty of baptismal innocence,—of “the beauty of holiness,”—just as often as we praise the beauty of a landscape, of a summer sea, of an unclouded night-sky in winter, of a picture, a statue, or a poem? It is evident, then, that beauty can be found wherever there is goodness. Not that all goodness is possessed of beauty;—for, in moral goodness more particularly, we not unfrequently find that what is good is combined with what is ugly and repulsive, though it is not ugly and repulsive because it is good, but rather because it is imperfect or limited in its goodness;—still it is true that there is no beauty where there is not goodness of some sort or another. Consequently, as I have said before, the idea of beauty extends itself to all those countless realms of being in the sensible, intellectual, and moral order, in which goodness finds a home.

I purpose, then, in the present conference to point out to you in what sense it is that God is the only

Beautiful. "He is all lovely ; such is my Beloved ; and He is my Friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem."* You see, my brethren, that the inspired words of Solomon describe our good God as all Lovely ; and, I suppose, that by the phrase he intends to teach us that God is the Fulness of Beauty, as He is the Fulness of all that is good. But, as we have seen in a former conference, God is not only the supreme Good, because He is the highest, chiefest, and noblest among a countless multitude of inferior goods (though this is true also) ; but because He is the Fulness of perfection and goodness, embracing, containing all actual and possible goodness within Himself. And, in like manner, is He all lovely, all beautiful, because He contains all beauty within Himself, in the inexhaustible riches of His own infinite Perfection. There is no goodness outside of Him which is not in Himself, and, as a consequence, there is no beauty which is a stranger to the ineffable Supremacy of His Being and of His Excellence. He is, therefore, not only all beautiful, but all Beauty. Search out beauty in every order, under every form ;—let the imagination picture to itself all its possible combinations and varieties ; summon to your aid the genius of all those who have produced the beautiful under the guardian care of the various arts,—multiply these forms of the beautiful beyond the reach of human or angelic arithmetic,—exalt them even beyond their capacity of perfection,—make them into one exquisite whole,—still would our God not only contain, but infinitely transcend them. And

* Cant. v. 16.

He is this, because He is all goodness in Himself, as I have hinted before; and beauty is the sheen of goodness.

There is, therefore, nothing of beauty which, somehow or other, He does not contain within Himself. And here a similar distinction must be made to that which I suggested, when treating of the goodness of God. There are certain forms of beauty which are *formally* in God. All that is spiritually beautiful,—the light of moral order,—the glow of love,—the brightness of sanctity,—are in Him in their most perfect form; or rather they are Himself. But corporal or sensible beauty (save in the Sacred Humanity of the Incarnate God), cannot belong to Him in its own substantial and specific nature. The reason is, because it essentially connotes imperfection; and God forbid that we should ever harbour the thought of predicating imperfection of the Divine Being. Still, however, such beauty is His; and it is within Him, so to speak, not formally but *virtually*. His own incomparable Beauty can act by Its infinite Virtue, not only upon the human soul even to its inmost recesses, but also upon each bodily sense, producing therein far more ravishing delights than such as could be wakened into life by any visible or corporeal object. And the Divine Beauty can do this, because, by reason of Its infinite Fulness, It can play upon each human faculty by the unseen touch of Its irresistible Power. It has then all the virtue of sensible beauty without the imperfection which necessarily attaches to the latter.

And these riches of created beauty our God has

within Himself, is Himself, in inconceivable eminence and inconceivable simplicity. They are not an accident of His sovereignty. They are His Nature, His Essence, His Being, Himself. They are His Justice, His Holiness, His Mercy, His Fatherhood. They permeate all His attributes, because they are wondrously one with all.

I now proceed to offer you, my brethren, another reason why God is the one and only Beautiful, not as though there are no fair and beauteous objects outside God, but because these too, as I have said before, stripped of all imperfection, are supereminently contained in the Divine Fulness. The reason to which I refer is this: God is the one, great Parent of the Universe; therefore He is the one, supremely Beautiful. Before, however, attempting to elucidate this argument, I must remind you of a fundamental principle in the doctrine of causation, which, although I have already considered it in a former conference, I must now briefly repeat, in order that you may be able to follow the course of thought that will lead on to the desired conclusion. Of necessity, the whole virtue, and goodness, and beauty of the effect must be precontained, *at least equivalently*, in the cause. If this be true,—and who that believes at all in efficient causes can deny it?—then, the universal Cause must contain in Himself the whole virtue, goodness, beauty of the universal Creation. Look out then upon that great and wondrous handiwork of love;—look upward to the heavens with their myriad lamps of night,—search into the abysses beneath, their central fire, the hard primeval

rocks, the strata with their innumerable fossils,—cast your eye over the surface of the earth, its seas, its great skeletons of mountains, its bubbling fountains, its raging torrents, its peacefully flowing rivers, its unruffled lakes, hill and dale, nestling valleys, gigantic forests, sheltering woods and thickets;—gaze out upon the trees, shrubs, plants, creepers, the green grass of the meadow, the wild flowers, corn, fruits, the changing but always lovely foliage, the seaweeds, with their endless difference of form and succession of exquisite colour;—summon before you the different species of beasts which inhabit the four quarters of our globe, with their alternate gracefulness of structure and majesty of strength;—look attentively through the aviary of the world with its countless variety of feathered tenants;—dive into the waters for all the different species of fishes which hide in the depths or line the coasts and shallows;—examine the realm of insects, reptiles, animalculæ invisible to unaided sight;—watch the rosy morning, the warm sunset with its upper canopy of gold, the lights and shadows cast over field and meadow by the inconstant and shifting clouds, the dead winter clothed in its virgin pall of snow, the young life of the budding spring, the murky frown of the thunder-cloud, the lightning writing its dazzling hieroglyphics athwart the sky, the dew-drops hanging like heavenly lamps from grass and flower;—recall to memory those wondrous delights of childhood and youth, when you nestled in the bosom of Nature as in the arms of a tender, loving mother, rejoicing in the novel charms of her variegated dress, delights which

have since sobered down amid the wear and tear of life;—then lift up your eyes to the highest heaven, worship before the Throne of the Incomprehensible Majesty, owning that “He that made them is mightier than they: for by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby;”*—owning that “All men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God, and who, by these good things that are seen, could not understand Him *Who is*, neither, by attending to the works, have acknowledged Who was the Workman.”†

I must recall to your memory a remark which I made at the commencement. There are those who have defined that beauty essentially consists in unity of proportion. As it seems to me, there is much of truth in the idea, albeit I cannot accept it as an exhaustive definition. Taking it for what it is worth, it is strictly verified,—nay, superabundantly, infinitely,—in the Divine perfection. For within that fathomless Sea of Essence *Abyssus abyssum invocat*—“Deep calleth unto deep.”‡ As we understand it,—and our knowledge of God, miserably deficient as it is, represents so much that is true,—there is an unspeakable harmony in the Divine Perfections, which finds a dim echo in the sweet beauty of His creation. God’s Love is not His Justice,—His Mercy is not His Vengeance,—His Wisdom is not His Power,—yet all are ineffably one; for He is one, and His Attributes are His Being, Himself. There is therefore marvellous proportion, yet again no propor-

* Wisdom xiii. 4, 5. † Wisdom xiii. 1. ‡ Psalm xli. 8.

tion, because of the infinite Unity. But there is that which is eminently equivalent to proportion; and proportion does not exist in the depthless Abyss of His Essence, only because it connotes multiplicity; and *that* is imperfection. But His fulness is, after a sort, proportion, because, though one, It contains all goodness beyond power of thought.

It has been said,—and I have called your attention to it already,—that there is a special beauty, and that of the highest order, in virtue and sanctity. But whatever there is of light and glory in created sanctity, is but a dim and most imperfect reflex of the Holiness of our good God. From Him all true virtue and sanctity proceed; for they are the product of His Grace, and, in loving them, we are really loving Him. Again: the splendour of His Holiness is such, that it is the eternal life and beatification of those who see Him face to face in the City of the Saints. Words cannot describe It, imagination fails most miserably in picturing It. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, the heart of man hath not conceived, what are the wonders of Its infinite excess of glory. It is this which makes the chief misery, the awful torment of hell; that in that pit of darkness no ray of God's light penetrates the awful void. All is disorder and confusion; for His face is turned away for ever from those rebels against His Loving Mercy.

Once more. Among the descriptions of beauty to which I have referred at the outset, there is one which has a special claim on our attention, because of its manifest bearings on the august subject with

which I am at present concerned. It has been said that beauty consists in multiplicity with eminent union of proportion. How wonderfully is this definition likewise verified in the grand mystery of the Eternal and Ever-blessed Trinity! Here we find a Divine Plurality, which contains in infinite excess all that is unmingledly perfect in multiplicity without any of those imperfections which necessarily, in created things, accompany it and impair its excellence. It not only contains within the abyss of Its incomprehensible truth riches of an infinite Inter-communication, but of an infinitely perfect order. For the Father from everlasting to everlasting unchangeably generates the Word, to Whom, speaking after the language of men, He communicates substantially the riches of His Wisdom, Truth, infinite Perfection; so that the Son is "the Brightness of His Father's Glory, and the express Image of His Person."* And the Father eternally contemplating His Son, and the only-begotten Son His Father, an infinite stream of Love pours forth from One to the Other, Whose term is the Holy Ghost; to Whom, as proceeding from Both, Father and Son communicate, as it were, from everlasting to everlasting the whole treasures of the Divine Fulness. Thus is it,—oh! incomprehensible mystery,—that not only the Father speaks to the Son and the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost to the Father and the Son by the generated Word, but the Son speaks to the other two Divine Persons by that same Word, Which is Himself. And, in like manner, not

* Heb. i. 3.

only does the Father love the Son and the Holy Ghost, and the Son love the Father and the Holy Ghost, by the substantial coequal Spirit of Love, but the Blessed Spirit loves the Father and the Son by the same Spirit.

This is the Divine Intercommunication of which I just spoke. But there is also a supereminently perfect Order. For though in all things the three Eternal Persons are coequal, so that They are coeternal, consubstantial; yet is there an infinite harmony of Order. For the Everlasting Father—may I use the term which alone can convey to us the mystery?—is underived. He is First,—not in order of time,—not in order of nature,—not in order of dignity,—but in order of a supercelestial Fecundity. From Him the other Persons proceed, while He Himself proceeds from None. The Son comes next, for procession from the intellect precedes procession from the will; just as in created beings volition presupposes thought, action, motive. Because, then, the Son is generated by the intellect of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Will of the Father and the Son, therefore the Son is second in the order of the Divine Persons; the Holy Ghost, last. Again: a concept requires for its generation but that one intellect which conceives it; love requires two persons, for it is essentially drawn, essentially tends towards an object outside itself. Its practical development consists in union and intercommunication of goods. Therefore, once more, the Son is second in the Divine Order, because He is the Word; the Holy Ghost is third, because He is the

Spirit of Love. And thus it comes to pass that, as I have remarked in another place, this last Person in the Divine Fecundity is declared by the Fathers of the Church to be the Complement of the Ever-blessed Trinity.

But this ineffable union of intercommunication and order becomes more dazzling in its unapproachable brightness, when we consider it in the light of the Simplicity of the Divine Nature. The union, of which I speak, resolves itself into absolute and completest unity. Not that, with the Sabellian, I would even suggest the heretical doctrine of a mere conceptual distinction of Persons, founded on diversity of operations. Far be it from me to say a word which might seem to obscure a dogma which the Church of Christ has everywhere taught for more than eighteen hundred years. The real distinction of the Divine Persons is based,—to speak after the manner of the Christian schools,—on the reality of the Divine Relations; and a real relation, as reason teaches us, requires a real distinction between the terms of that relation. There is then, as Faith teaches us, a real distinction between the Divine Persons without possibility of composition. But in all besides, in the perfection of the Divine attributes, in the possession of all that fills up, so to speak, the infinite plenitude of the Divine Excellence, everything is unspeakably one. The wisdom, power, goodness, mercy, love of the Father, are the wisdom, power, goodness, mercy, love of the Son; and the wisdom, power, goodness, mercy, love of the Father and the Son are the wisdom, power, goodness,

love of the Holy Ghost. The Substance, Essence, Nature of the Father is that of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Nay, even the Wisdom by which the Father generates the Son is the Wisdom of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; and the Love, by which the Father and the Son breathe forth the Holy Ghost, is the Love of the Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father and the Son. There remains but one Perfection, belonging to one Divine Person, which seems excluded by the law of contradiction from the other Two;—that Perfection which constitutes the Divine Personality Itself. But neither is it excluded. For by virtue of that Circuminsession, by which all that belongs to the Divine Nature in any way is after a sort common to the Sacred Three, all these Relations, because they are the Divine Substance, are contained in Each Person, not as constitutive of Person,—for that is peculiar to One, or at the most Two,—but as being, after an ineffable manner, identical with the Divine Being, and therefore in all Three. And this is what the Doctors of the Church call Circuminsession.

Thus, then, we discover, in this fathomless abyss of the Divine Nature, plurality in a most marvellous unity. Little can we understand of God's excellent Beauty in this world. We live by faith; and *Est fides sperandarum substantia rerum, argumentum non apparentium*—"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things as yet unseen."* We must wait for completer knowledge till faith is exchanged for sight, and we come to see our good God face to

* Heb. xi. 1.

face. But still, what little we know by Divine Revelation enables us to pierce somewhat the cloud which now surrounds His Presence, and to catch at times a faint ray of His excelling Glory. Every way we turn, whatever theory of beauty we may adopt, on all sides the surpassing Beauty of our God environs us. Creation in its manifold magnificence is, as it were, Its Alphabet. And yet here too comparison fails; for creation only supplies us with but a few letters to form the infinite vocabulary of His Loveliness. What He has done is much; but what He can do is more without possibility of limit. Intellectual beauty, too, and moral beauty, and the beauty of grace,—all, all, are His in fathomless unity of perfection.

Before proceeding to my second point, there is an observation which I am in duty bound to make. Hitherto I have purposely built up my argument upon the facts of natural Religion and Theology; and where I have introduced anything which belongs exclusively to the Christian Revelation, it has been, as it were, *per transcennam*, and by way of further illustration. Now, however, I have pursued, and am about to pursue the argument upon the strength of a dogma which is exclusively Christian. And, in truth, how am I to help myself? It is a historic fact that the liberal arts have marvelously developed,—I might almost say, been re-created,—since the rise of Christianity; and there are few, I imagine, who would be bold enough to deny that this development owes its origin to the influence of the Christian faith, which has been

brought to bear upon these arts. Under such circumstances it would be plainly in opposition to all principles of philosophical inquiry, were I to omit the consideration of that which, as a fact, has produced so momentous an effect upon modern Esthetic. It would be out of place, as you may easily perceive, to attempt on the present occasion any Theological proof of the dogma of the Incarnation itself; I shall, therefore, assume its truth, and consider it merely in its relation to art.

It may be objected, then, against what I have just been saying that esthetic, as developed by human genius, must essentially depend on the peculiar constitution of man. Now this, I own, is perfectly true. We are not treating about an esthetic, if this were possible, belonging to the Angels, but to that which has had its origin and development among ourselves. We are not examining into the nature of a possible, but into the causes of an actual fact. But esthetic, as its very name implies, deals with the senses and sensible activity. If this be true,—and who may venture to deny it?—then, however you may be able to convince me that God is the only beautiful, you have not moved one step towards proving to me that He is the foundation of Esthetic. For what even initial relation is there between a pure Spirit in His incomprehensible Simplicity of Being, and my senses which can naturally be affected only by things sensible and corporeal? It may be very true that God is infinitely Beautiful in Himself and only Ultimate Cause of beauty in others, but then

I cannot see, feel, perceive His Beauty. It is far out of my reach. It is, therefore, to me as though it were not. Such is the objection.

I might say, in reply, that such statement requires some modification, seeing that, if we accept the universal voice of mankind as a certain test of truth, we must admit that there are other forms of beauty than those which appeal to the senses, and that the former have a real effect on the higher faculties of our nature. But then the objection is urged further. For it is evident that such spiritual forms of beauty only belong to Esthetic in so far as they can be made present to the senses. And thus the same difficulty recurs.

If I were to urge that the Beauty of the great Creator is revealed in the works of His Hand, I shall be told that the loveliness of Creation is indeed the material of Art, but then we are exactly where we were before. For what is sensibly beautiful cannot reveal, in any true sense of the word, spiritual Beauty; it can only symbolize it. The rest is a syllogism; and art perishes beneath a logical process. Holy Scripture teaches us as much; for the Wise Man, referring to the fact that foolish men had made gods of the creatures, because they were captivated by created beauty, reproves them by urging, "With whose beauty if they, being delighted, took them to be gods, let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they: for the first Author of beauty made all these things."* A cognition, therefore, of the Beauty of God depends upon a syllogism

* Wisdom xiii. 3.

based on the principle of causality. Thus we have mounted to a higher range of faculties. Reasoning belongs exclusively to the mind ; Esthetic rests principally upon the senses, emotions, imagination. The things of nature, the visible beauty of the universe animate and inanimate, are patent to my senses, affect my imagination, can be reproduced by art, whether I refer them up to God or no. If I go beyond what they offer me, I intrude upon the realm of reason ; and there Esthetic would be quite out of place.

I think that there is some exaggeration in the way of putting the objection ; still I must acknowledge,—nay, I desire to acknowledge,—that there is much truth in it. Further than this, it is my purpose to adopt it substantially as my own, in order to introduce the main argument by which I shall endeavour to establish my proposition.

Let me conceive, then, the whole human family, of all generations of time prior to the great Nativity, congregated in some temple capable of holding them. Let me further conceive that a prophet of the Lord arises to address them, endowed by miracle with the power of making his voice heard in their midst. "Cease," we may suppose him to say, "cease from making an idol of what is beautiful in the creature. Love is due only to Him, the One only Beautiful, the Lord your God. His beauty will alone satisfy all the desires of your hearts. Use the beauty of the creature as the means for attaining to the Beauty of the Creator." I imagine a great cry going upward from that great congregation, "Show us the Beauty

of our Lord, and we will follow your behest. But we cannot see Him. He is hidden in cloud. He can be known, but not felt, handled, touched. We gaze upon His vesture in the beautiful things of nature, but His face is turned from us. We will love Him, if He will manifest Himself to us. But it is hard for us, men of flesh and blood, to love the Invisible, and live upon the Beauty of a pure Spirit."

God's answer to this cry of our common nature was the Incarnation. He saw the need, and in His mercy He provided for it. I do not for one moment say, my brethren, that there were no other motives which induced our loving Father to send His Son into the world, "made of a woman;"* but I must again remind you that I am considering the Incarnation now only in its relation to Esthetic. Human nature had been ever yearning after this wondrous grace. Holy Job expressed this yearning, and at the same time his firm confidence in its satisfaction, where he says, *In carne mea videbo Deum meum, Quem visurus sum ego ipse, et oculi mei conspecturi sunt, et non alius; reposita est hæc spes mea in sinu meo*—"In my flesh shall I see God, Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom."† But as yet it was a mere yearning; for the fulness of times had not come. Patriarch, Prophet, Judge, King, the Saints in general of the Old Law, waited in patient expectation; but it was in Limbus only that "their eyes should see the King in His Glory." We are told it is true, that *Abraham exultavit ut videret diem*

* Gal. iv. 4.

† Job xix. 26, 27.

meum ; vidit, et gavisus est—"Abraham rejoiced that he might see My day ; he saw it, and was glad."* But he saw it only with the eye of faith, or in the external symbol of a supernatural Theophany. But the time at last came when God should be made manifest in the Flesh, and a royal Child should be born among us, Who was to be Emmanuel, God with us. And the great Evangelist St. John, who was so abundantly blest with the wondrous Vision, gives us His inspired testimony to the Mystery in a way singularly calculated to illustrate the subject which I am now setting before you. For he thus sums up the sacred doctrine in his Gospel: *Et Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis : et vidimus gloriam ejus, gloriam quasi Unigeniti a Patre, plenum gratiae et veritatis*—"And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt amongst us : and we have seen with our eyes His Glory,—the Glory as of the only-Begotten of the Father ;—the Word, full of grace and truth."† And the first words in his first Catholic Epistle more distinctly, so far as our present purpose is concerned, develope the same mighty truth. For he writes, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have diligently looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life ; (for the Life was manifested : and we have seen, and do bear witness, and declare unto you the eternal Life, Which was with the Father, and hath appeared to us :) That which we have seen and heard, we declare unto you."‡ You see how the loving disciple of the

* St. John viii. 56. † St. John i. 14. ‡ 1 St. John i. 1—3.

Sacred Heart insists upon the fact that he had seen with his eyes, carefully and diligently looked upon, touched with his hands, the Incarnate God ; and how he gives his own special testimony to the fact for the purpose of securing us in Apostolic fellowship,—fellowship “with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” It is this indeed which was the great wonder of the Incarnation, and ever has been, as it is yet, the greatest difficulty which infidels find in the way of their acceptance of Christian truth. That the omnipresent God should be circumscribed in a human body,—that the Everlasting should be born in time,—that the Almighty should robe Himself in the weakness of our babyhood,—that the great Creator and Father of the whole creation should become a creature,—that the invisible God, Whom no man hath seen at any time or can see, should be seen, looked upon, touched, handled, should have a human face, human affections and sympathies, and walk this earth, heard, talking and talked to,—this, I say, is a stupendous mystery, before which all other doctrines of our most holy Faith pale,—a mystery which is a continual stumbling-block to the pride of human reason. But with these difficulties I am not now concerned. I take the great doctrine as a Fact which has been accepted, *implicitly* by the faith of four thousand years, *explicitly* by the faith of above eighteen centuries. And I say that that Fact must have had, and has actually had the most momentous influence on Esthetic. It has changed the principles, elevated the aims, regenerated the action of Art in all its manifold branches. Christianity,—and most

especially the doctrine of the Incarnation which is its crown and centre,—is, as it has been described by one whose words are often precious,—“the life and soul of our whole modern culture. . . . It arose in the mystic days of man’s soul, and was spread abroad by the ‘preaching of the word,’ . . . and flew, like hallowed fire from heart to heart; till all were purified and illuminated by it; and its heavenly light shone, as it still shines, and as sun or star will ever shine, through the whole dark destinies of man.”*

I would say, then, that the Incarnation has had the most vital influence on Esthetic, because it has rendered God visible to the human senses. In the time of the Mosaic dispensation a strict prohibition, uttered by the Divine voice on the heights of Sinai, hindered the Jew from making images or pictures for religious veneration. I do not think that the reason of this prohibition is to be found alone in the known proneness of the children of Israel to idolatry. There was, doubtless, much in this; but I believe that another reason, equally cogent, presents itself at once to the eye of devout contemplation. God would, of course, be the first object of artistic representation in the interests of Divine Worship. But God was then invisible. It is true that, in certain rare and favoured cases, there had been from time to time Theophanies under sensible form; but these could not justify a visible representation of God by sculptor or painter. Now, however, since the time of the Incarnation, all is changed. For God has united our human nature in hypostatic union with

* Carlyle’s *Essays, On the Signs of the Times*, vol. ii., p. 158.

Himself. He became a Man, born of a Virgin of the race and lineage of Adam. He had a face, features, form, expression, like to ourselves. He had a human Heart, Whose pulsations of Divine Love lit up the features of the sweet Babe of Bethlehem. It is a tradition that the Holy Child was well known in Nazareth, when he dwelt there, for the more than Angelic beauty of His countenance. And when discord or angry passions would arise—as they too often do in the hearts of all of us—among the dwellers in that town, they had only to pay a visit to the Infant Jesus, and at once the billows were hushed to rest, and “there was a great calm;” so that the Child was commonly called by the dwellers in that place, *their Darling*. That spiritualized Beauty, in Which could be traced so clearly the lineaments of His Blessed Mother, must have been evidently cherished in the memory of Christ’s disciples; and indeed has been preserved for the devotion of the Church in the famous picture painted by St. Luke. It is plain to see how such a Divine manifestation in human flesh would give to the family of men that Object for which they had so long yearned; for it was no longer difficult to love God even with that sensible affection which we bestow upon our fellows.

There was another result of the Incarnation, which would have its influence on Christian Esthetic. It brought our God so very near to us; for He became thereby part of ourselves, so to speak. He clothed Himself with a human heart, and human sympathies; so that, while disrobing us of those fears

and the awe which His excelling Majesty had excited, He might allure us to love Him by the visible proof of His compassions. We are told that there must be a certain equality subsisting between two persons, if love or friendship is to have a chance of exercising its influence upon them. The Eternal Word accepted the doctrine; and, by becoming man, created that equality. It is to this result of the Incarnation that St. Paul is referring, when he says, *Non enim habemus Pontificem, qui non possit compati infirmitatibus nostris; tentatum autem per omnia pro similitudine absque peccato*—"For we have not a High Priest Who cannot sympathize with our infirmities; but was tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin."* There is nothing which attracts us to each other so much as a genuine and tender fellow-feeling. Thus, then, has Christ striven to win us by the deep humiliation of the Incarnation and the love of His Sacred Heart. And Christian art is throughout a sort of counter-demonstration of love. He is no longer with us visibly in the flesh; and, as painter, photographer, sculptor, strive to recall the absent and preserve their memory by the choice efforts of their hands, so Christian Esthetic perpetuates the memory of the two models respectively, in the two sexes, of all that is most lovely and loving in regenerated humanity;—the Mother and the Child.

But there is another thought which I wish to set before you, my brethren. The Incarnation has sacramentalized matter. When the judgment was pronounced in the Garden of Eden on our first

* Heb. iv. 15.

parents, we read that the ground, too, was cursed for their sakes. The effects of original sin poured over on to the earth itself. It too was, if I may dare so express myself, under the disgrace of its Creator and its God. So was it waiting also, yearning for the great redemption. And I cannot help thinking that St. Paul has this idea in his mind (though of course I do not exclude other meanings), when he says, *Expectatio creaturæ revelationem filiorum Dei expectat. Vanitati enim creatura subjecta est, non volens, sed propter Eum qui subiecit eam in spe: quia et ipsa creatura liberabitur a servitute corruptionis, in libertatem gloriæ filiorum Dei. Scimus enim quod omnis creatura ingemiscit, et parturit adhuc—* "The expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him Who made it subject in hope. Because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth, and is in labour even till now."* I own that this liberation will have its final accomplishment at the end of all things, when there shall be new heavens and a new earth; yet, as there is a regeneration on earth which is germ of that eternal regeneration awaiting hereafter the souls of just men made perfect, so there has been a great restoration of the creature derived from the Incarnation, which is seed of its future glory. For matter, as I have said before, had come under the sentence of the fall. It

* Rom. viii. 19—22.

had been degraded, so far as things inanimate can be degraded, from its pristine place. But a new and wondrous change took place, when our God united to Himself the nature of man. For, by so doing, He united to Himself the dust of the earth in hypostatic union;—matter was henceforth instinct with God;—it became sacramental throughout all its vast boundaries inanimate as well as animate;—it received within it a present pledge of a future resurrection;—and on the day of the Ascension it was carried upward to Heaven, passed for the first time the gates of the celestial city, was transported beyond all the vast hierarchies of Heaven, and took its place, as the Body of our Incarnate God, on the right hand of the throne of the Everlasting Father. Such a change could not but affect the whole relation of the visible creation to spiritual life. Matter was once dead; it is alive again, for God Himself has reanimated it.

Accordingly the material world, by virtue of the Incarnation has become one vast symbol, and a vehicle of sacramental grace. Bread, wine, water, oil, salt, balsam, wax, spittle, have been endowed in greater or less degree with sacramental grace, and two of them have been made the ready victims of a marvellous transubstantiation. Rosaries, crosses, crucifixes, medals, scapulars, have been breathed upon by the breath of the God-Man, and have been transformed into caskets of grace. Pictures and statues have had their share in this universal regeneration of matter; and have from time to time, by virtue of the Omnipotent, given a marvellous testi-

mony to that truth of which they are the symbol. I do not for one moment say that *all* the accounts of miraculous pictures and images are to be received with undoubting faith. Each must stand or fall according to the weight of testimony producible on its behalf, precisely after the same fashion as other facts which rely for their verification on human testimony; unless, indeed, the infallible Voice of the Church should have given judgment in the case. But to deny that such miracles have ever occurred,—and that, too, more especially on *à priori* grounds,—is not only to deny the Omnipotence of our God, Who, as He says Himself, could raise up from the paving-stones of Jerusalem “children unto Abraham,”* but ignores the wondrous elevation of matter which has resulted from the mystery of the Incarnation.

In like manner, nature has become one vast symbol. The lamb speaks to us of the Lamb dumb before His shearers,† the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;‡—the ass reminds, us by the cross upon its back, of Him Who once rode upon it;—the ox, lion, eagle, of three of the Evangelists;§—the fish, of the sacred Monogram,|| and the baptismal birth; one, in particular, of the pressure of St. Peter’s fingers;¶ the rose reminds us of the rose of Sharon, the Saviour of love; the lily of the valley,** of her, that Blessed among women; incense is “the prayers of the Saints;”††

* St. Matt. iii. 9. † Isaias liii. 7. ‡ Apoc. xiii. 8.

§ Ezechiel i. 10. || Ἰχθϋς.

¶ St. Matt. xvii. 26. ** Cant. ii. 1. †† Apoc. viii. 4.

—lights, candlesticks upon the altar denote His Presence Who is the Light of the world ;*—and the palm-branch reminds us of His triumphal entry into the holy city. In a word, the animate and inanimate creation is transformed into one vast symbol of heavenly realities. The things of nature have become more than types of an ever-living mystery, as the burdensome ceremonial of the Mosaic law had been made, throughout its length and breadth, the appointed symbol of a promise yet to be fulfilled. It was this which established the great difference between the two dispensations. The whole of the Jewish ceremonial was a ceremonial of hope. The symbol was there indeed ; but it was an empty symbol. Neither was there that liberty of matter, if I may so express myself, which is to be found so plenteously realized in the Christian regeneration. Matter was, as yet, aloof from God ; and was only sanctified, in those comparatively rare cases in which it was devoted to sacred purposes, by anticipation. Hence its use, as a sensible representative of Divine realities for purposes of worship, was strictly prohibited by what is called in the Catholic Church, following the division of St. Augustine, the first, but what in the Protestant Catechism is known as the second commandment. For the days had not yet come, when,—to adopt our Blessed Lord's own words, which explain the great change of which I am speaking,—*Vcri adoratores adorabunt Patrem in spiritu et veritate*—"The true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit

* Apoc. i. 12, 13.

and in truth.”* And that day, that hour, had come when our Lord was speaking to the Samaritan woman; for, by virtue of the Incarnation, matter was filled with the Spirit of Life in the way I have already pointed out, and the symbol was no longer an empty, lifeless form, but took its place among the appurtenances of that worship which was in spirit and in truth.

One great result, then, of this blessed Mystery of our most holy Faith was to unite the visible with the invisible,—the things of sense with the vast realm of grace,—the temporary with the eternal,—earth with Heaven; and this, because God and man,—the Word of God and matter, had been united in one hypostatic union. There had been heretofore a wall of separation built up by sin between God and His material creation; but “He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and breaking down the middle wall of partition, the enmities in His flesh, abolishing the law of commandments in decrees, that He might make the two in Himself into one man, establishing peace; and might reconcile both to God in one body by the Cross, destroying the enmities by Himself.”†

I think, my brethren, that you must have already perceived the relevancy of what I have been just exposing to the immediate question which is before us. It would, indeed, be folly to deny that the liberal arts flourished, in certain countries and among certain peoples, before the great epoch of the Incarnation. Yet even in these cases the beauty of God, poured out on His visible creation, was the foundation of

* St. John iv. 23.

† Ephes ii. 14—16.

Esthetic. But I affirm that this union of God with matter,—this elevation, consecration of matter,—was calculated, of its very nature, to produce a complete revolution in art. Heretofore material and sensible representations were precisely worth, — with few exceptions too trifling to enumerate, but which serve in their isolation to confirm my argument,—the accuracy of their representation, and nothing more. They began and ended in themselves. They were copies, artistic transcripts ;—nothing more. But, when the God-Man appeared in His double nature on the world's theatre, we should have expected, antecedently to the event, an entire change. A new Bible was prepared ; for a new language had been given to material things. They could thus become, naturally enough, a vocabulary of grace ;—symbols, full of a Divine reality. Henceforth they seemed destined to become the shrine of revealed Truth. Henceforth,—to quote the words of an eminent author,—art “ must dwell in reality, and become manifest to men in the forms among which they live and move :

As all Nature's countless changes
But one changeless God proclaim,
So in Art's wide kingdoms ranges
One sole meaning, still the same :
This is Truth, eternal Reason,
Which from Beauty takes its dress,
And serene, through time and season,
Stands for aye in loveliness.”*

But there is something more which I have to remark. By the fact of the Incarnation not only

* Carlyle's *Essays, State of German Literature*, Essay ii., vol. i., p. 71.

was matter divinized, but the spirit of man was disenchained,—the separation between Him and his God destroyed,—the Kingdom of Heaven opened to his view, nay, in a sense, planted within him,—full freedom restored to his will by the power of grace,—hope and confidence planted in his breast. This is “the law of liberty”* of which St. James speaks;—that “freedom wherewith,” as St. Paul remarks, “Christ hath made us free.”† And this freedom of the spirit of man from the bondage of materialism and of utter hopelessness would naturally affect all its energies, and give to Art, as the production of human genius, a life and loveliness which it could not have attained before. Life was no longer a riddle; man learnt that his aim was upward, his destiny to be for ever in the company of the Saints his elder brothers who had gone before him, and that he was one of a vast family of Heaven, whose Father is God, whose eldest Brother is the Incarnate Word, whose Mother is the sweet Mother of Jesus.

Well, my brethren, and what is the spirit of the family but the spirit of love? Love it is which unites the Church on earth into one world-wide communion;—love it is which unites the Church on earth to the Church in Purgatory, and the glorified Church in Heaven; love it is which in the heavenly Jerusalem will unite each to all, and all to the Everlasting and most glorious God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And shall this new spirit of love, thus permeating man’s whole being, have no effect on the playthings of his life? Has his imagination,—have his affections

* St. James ii. 12.

† Galat. iv. 31.

and sympathies of heart,—been set free; and shall Christian art echo merely the dreary sensualism of Pagan times? Has the soul of man been liberated, his body sown with seeds of immortality, and shall heart and imagination alone be deprived of the common redemption? Shall these be imprisoned still in the cheerless prison of Pagan or sceptical superstition? This would be a miracle, indeed!

Thus much for antecedent probability. But I now proceed to the inexorable logic of facts,—to make use of a stereotyped phrase, current in our day. I intend very briefly to review the changes in Art which have *de facto* resulted from Christian civilization; and I am convinced that a careful review of Esthetic, since the time of the Incarnation, will justify the expectation which antecedent probability has already raised.

I obviously begin with architecture, both because it is naturally first in order of time by reason of the temporal necessities of man, and also because of all the liberal arts it is least mimetic. Vast relics have been left us of the olden time. There still remain, the wonder of our self-conceited generation, the ruins of Palmyra, temples on the Nile, pyramids of Egypt, stone-circles of the Druids, the gigantic remains of Pelasgic perseverance. And in Greece too, the home of the beautiful, the land of classical association, the earth is strewn with monuments of architectural genius. Take the Parthenon, which those who are best capable of judging pronounce to be the most perfect production of Pagan art. And what I am about to say of it applies with even greater force to all the great remains of pre-Christian Architecture.

Take it as a whole ; it is beautiful, I own. But with what sort of beauty is it clothed ? You can see in the British Museum the remains of its graceful sculptures taken from pediment and metope. But these we must exclude, if we would form a just appreciation of the building as a mere work of architectural genius. I admit, then, that it abounds in richness of exquisite proportion ; but it is not symbolical ; or, if symbolical, symbolizes only the earth and things earthly. Its principal lines run even with the ground, bound down, as it were, by the law of an inexorable fate. Compare it, for a moment, with a Gothic Cathedral. I am free to own that I am no Goth in the party sense of that term. I have a rooted dislike to those Gothic vestments which, not without a latent spirit of nationality, have been dug out from their medieval sepulchre, and find no counterpart in the actual, present vestiary of the Church. Nay more, I can find a real esthetic delight in visiting those old basilicas of Rome, which mark the transition from Paganism to Christianity. I will even go so far as to say that I think them more suited to our wants in England for the time being. Yet, after all, who is there that can gaze upon one of those noble piles which Catholic piety reared in the ages of faith, and not feel that the whole building, from entrance to sanctuary window, is steeped in the mysteries of the Christian creed ? Those arches like the "lifting up of pure hands,"*—that groining interlaced with the dimness of mystery ;—those clustering columns going up with the freedom of a supernatural

* 1 Tim. ii. 8.

unity towards God ;—nave and aisles leading us on to the Presence by faith, hope, and charity ;—the porch of humility ;—flying buttresses portraying the aid which the State should give the Church ;—those lines intermingling and at last melting off into the infinite ;—surely here, at all events we can find “sermons in stones.” It needs no Durandus to guide us in our search after the symbolism of the Holy Place ; for it speaks, of itself, to our hearts. Every part, every ornament, preaches to us of the law of liberty and of the influence of a supernatural charity.

I now pass on to sculpture. Here, indeed, the influence of Christianity would be less felt by reason of the limited range of representation to which the chisel is restricted. I am not now speaking, of course, of bosses, frieze work, and other minor ornaments pertaining to architectural design. But I refer to sculpture as an independent art ; and, as such, it is almost exclusively confined to the human form. Yet even here a change took place, and crucifix and statues of the Madonna and the Saints took the place of heathen gods and goddesses, Grecian heroes, and Roman Emperors. In a word, sculpture became symbolical. The transformation was, however, less apparent, because that art is entirely occupied with form ; and the human form, by itself, is feebly expressive of a sacrament of grace.

But I now betake myself to a sister art, where the effects of the Incarnation are most apparent. I allude to painting. Here there is much to aid the artist in his efforts to embody spiritual mysteries. He not only deals with form, but with expression,

colour, backgrounds, multiform grouping, framework of drapery, sky-speech, and the rest. To single out one characteristic, he can give a meaning to the eyes, — those windows of the soul, — which it is impossible for sculpture to attempt. And in this art of painting we trace, clearly enough, the regenerating power of the Christian Creed. I do not simply allude to that vast multiplication of pictures of Christ and the Madonna, though this fact is significant enough in its way; for herein it can boast of no superiority over its rival, the art of sculpture. But I speak of the eminently symbolical character it assumed, so long as modern art was Christian, that is, before the time of the *renaissance*. It would be best for me to explain what I mean by example. But, remember, I do not profess to speak to you, my hearers, as a *connoisseur*. About flesh-tints and due expression of muscle, and other similar properties of imitative art, I know next to nothing. But this hinders no man from reading the great idea — if there be one — which the picture is intended to convey. Well, so far as I am concerned, there is no picture, save one, which has produced a more lasting, more deep impression on heart and imagination than the Pietà of Francia in our National Gallery. The one exception to which I allude is the famous Sposalizio of Raphael, which is to be found in the Milan Gallery, — a work in the first style of that great genius, before he lost, in the mazes of a wretched world, the innocence of his spring. Over that picture of Francia one can meditate for hours; for it is full of holy thoughts. It is *in* the flesh, but

not *of* the flesh. The whole breathing is Divine. Those plaintive eyes red with weeping ; — that Mother of Dolours so resigned in the midst of her sea of sorrow ; — that God-like corpse, not supported but attended at head and feet by adoring Angels, dead yet hypostatically united to the Word, — all of it is a Creed on canvas. I remember once pointing out this picture, with the enthusiasm which I felt, to one much better qualified than I to judge of the dress, as I may call it, — the conventionalities of painting. His surprise at my warmth of praise was unmistakeable. He pointed out that the body was elongated beyond the true proportions of the human frame, and that no dead body could naturally lie in such a pose. I dared not confess my creed ; but to me these were the two great proofs of Francia's genius. I have seen it stated that the Apollo Belvidere is taller than the ordinary proportion, and that the great sculptor did it expressly to infuse Divinity into his block of marble. Be this as it may, Francia has done it, and has to my mind succeeded ; and the posture of the dead Body tells us, as clearly as colour can speak, that we are looking on the corpse not of a man, but of a God. What to me that flesh-tints are admirable, muscles anatomically correct, if, as Rubens has done, you take the portrait of the Christ from the model of a drayman with his muscular frame and stalwart limbs, and represent the holy women of the Gospel by portraits of meretricious women ? The same observation may apply to paintings of the present day. I cannot conceive a poem more perfect than

the picture of Overbeck, in which he represents our Blessed Lord teaching His Apostles the Prayer of prayers. Yet that artist was said to be deficient in his colouring. Well, be it so, I would rather live by the light of his esthetic teaching than revel in all the luxurious and sensual realism of an Etty. You see, I trust, at what I have been aiming. Christianity has made of Art, so long as it dwelt beneath the shadow of the Church, one vast symbol of things eternal. It has painted beauty, but that beauty is the only true one,—the Beauty of Heaven. And all, from first to last, breathes liberty of will, sorrow, love.

I now proceed to the consideration of another art, whose effect upon the human heart can scarcely be exaggerated. It is almost the only art which, if we may trust the words of inspiration, will be allowed to perpetuate its influence in the eternity of Heaven. I allude to music. Here at all events the informing power of the Christian faith can scarcely be denied. The world had lived on for at least five thousand years ; yet was it reserved for the ages of faith to evolve that mysterious system of harmony which had been latent until then. There is to me something most striking in this fact. For how, by means of created sound, could that spirit of liberty with which Christ has made us free, and those bonds of love by which differing tribes, nations, and classes of men are united through the bonds of a supernatural charity in the Church, be more wonderfully symbolized than in that concord of notes, that commingling of various instruments and voices,

"which brings all heaven before our eyes"? There are some who will admit nothing less Ecclesiastical than the majestic strains of Palestrina; others are free to admit Beethoven and Mendelssohn; but the one and the other turn themselves away from Haydn and Mozart. I cannot help thinking that their scruple is groundless; I see in these latter the play at once of love and the exultation of Christian liberty. But their chords are symbols of heavenly mysteries; and their very joyousness is the joyousness of the Saints.

I must now direct your attention in the last place to poetry. And I cannot do better, by way of prelude, than quote words of wisdom uttered by one from whom I have willingly borrowed before. *Cum talis sis, utinam noster censes.* "Poetic beauty," says this writer, "in its pure essence, is not by this theory, as by all our theories, from Hume's to Alison's, derived from anything external, or of merely intellectual origin; not from association, or any reflex or reminiscence of mere sensations, nor from natural love either of imitation, of similarity in dissimilarity, of excitement by contrast, or of seeing difficulties overcome. On the contrary it is assumed as underrived; not borrowing its existence from such sources, but as lending to most of these their significance and principal charm for the mind. It dwells, and is born in the inmost spirit of man, *united to all love of virtue, to all belief in God; or, rather, it is one with this love and this belief*, another phase of the same highest principle in the mysterious infinitude of the human soul. To apprehend this beauty of poetry, in its

fullest and purest brightness, is not easy, but difficult; . . . yet to all uncorrupted hearts some effulgences of this heavenly glory are here and there revealed. . . . Sensation, even of the finest and most rapturous sort, is not the end but the means. Art is to be loved, not because of its effects, but because of itself; not because it is useful for spiritual pleasure, or even for moral culture, but because it is Art, and the highest in man, and the soul of all Beauty. To inquire after its *utility*, would be like inquiring after the *utility* of a God."* The burden of these words is in strictest accordance with the great point on which I have been insisting. Christianity has infused into poetry another life. Whether we turn to Epic, and compare the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* with the *Divina Comedia*, or even the *Paradise Lost* (full of faults as it is), or compare Greek Tragedy through its various stages of development with the productions of Calderon, Massinger, and Shakspeare, we shall discover after careful comparison that the spirit of love has been leavening the whole lump, and that the pressure of an impersonal and irresistible fate, which gave to the Greek chorus a helplessness almost ludicrous to modern taste and reared aloft the three unities, has yielded place to One Who, preserving to the human will its fullest liberty, directs the issue of all its actions to the greater glory of His Justice and Mercy.

But it would be utterly impossible for me at the close of this conference to evolve an idea so pregnant of principles of criticism, according to its merits.

* Carlyle's *Essays, On the State of German Literature*, vol. i., p. 60.

What I have already said, will be sufficient as I hope, to gain your assent to my present proposition, viz. : that as God is the only Beautiful, so He is the Foundation of Esthetic.

What, therefore, remains for me but to commend this series to Him, Who is the only True, the only Good, the only Beautiful? O Thou Ancient of days, eternal, immutable God, most loving, full of mercies and compassion, O Thou Lover of souls, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three coequal Persons, one God, deign to accept from Thy weak and unworthy servant this humble effort to vindicate before an unbelieving age the supremacy of Thy Rights and of Thy Perfections. May Thy grace accompany this volume wherever it may go, that prejudices and scepticism may be trampled under foot, intellects may be enlightened, the wills of Thy children may be turned to Thee, and Thy super-excelling Beauty may inundate their heart and imagination. This it is which has been my aim, my desire in these conferences ; and too happy shall I be if Thou bless the reading of them in such wise, that even one soul may learn to love Thee more and serve Thee better.

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